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*Wanderings
in
Wild
Africa*



Novels by
C. T. STONEHAM



The Whistling Thorn
The Man in the Pig Mask
The Lion's Way
The White Hunter
Etc.





THE AUTHOR

*Wanderings in
Wild
Africa*

by
C. T. Stoneham

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*To those Adventurers
who do not write books*

Introduction

MOST books about Africa, I find, are of two kinds: the sportsman's reminiscences (generally a catalogue of slaughter), and the traveller's tale, where the appearance and habits of natives and game are set out minutely and, on occasion, dully.

Between these two extremes lies the rare and entertaining story of the experiences and observations of the resident, whose work and play bring him into close contact with the soil, the fauna, and the people; who sees, not with the eyes of the scientist or globe-trotter, but with the understanding of one to whom the life of veld and forest is the normal, uneventful life of long custom.

First impressions are almost always false impressions. Confronted with the unfamiliar, the mind automatically translates its receptions into a language it understands. Natives become the black Europeans of the missionary's fairy tale; animals display the characteristics made memorable by the stirring adventures of childhood's heroes; the country is plainly the mysterious, perilous land we have expected to find.

Tourists go to Africa in search of interest and excitement; often their opinions are formed before the journey is begun, and subsequent discoveries are made to conform to preconceived ideas. It is the journalist's trick of describing the event before it has taken place.

Our views of life are the outcome of education rather than experience (the novelist would have hard work to persuade his readers of the probability of his plots were it otherwise), but experience remains the only sound teacher, scepticism the only sure guide to understanding. But criticism at its best is influenced by comparison of that which is observed with that which is familiar, and this explains the traveller's interpretation of new experiences in terms of accustomed thought.

It is not generally realised that to the born colonial the land of his fathers is a foreign land, or, that the opinions and descriptions written by foreigners about his own land cause him astonishment and amusement. It is seldom that a national undertakes to explain his race and country to the foreigner, but when he does the explanation is more enlightening than all the careful analysis of the alien.

Among the books I have read about Africa only two contain the sure touch of knowledge and understanding. They are, *Jock of the Bush-veld*, and *My African Neighbours*. In the first one sees through Fitzgerald's eyes the life of the transport rider; in the second, Cuden-hove has depicted with unconscious genius the life of the wanderer in the African wilderness. They are both simple stories by simple men, and therein lies their value.

It has been truthfully said that it is not the splendid and exciting episodes of history that give insight into the lives of past generations, but the record of commonplace, unexciting events of their ordinary occupations.

In these stories of safari life I have been guided by this realisation; I have tried to give a truthful picture of

trail and camp, relating my own experiences exactly as they happened, without any attempt to impress the reader with accounts of difficulties and dangers overcome or to thrill him with descriptions of homeric combats with wild beasts and war-like natives. They are records of adventures for adventure's sake.

In these days of long-distance flights and speed records, adventure, in the minds of the public, has become inseparable from risk and spectacular achievement, but a moment's reflection will show that the sensation created by these undertakings is disproportionate to their difficulties. It is more difficult and hazardous to cross Africa on foot than in an airplane ; it is more dangerous to cross the North Sea in a rowboat than to break motor-boat records. Beside the exploits of Thorfin Karlsefne, Daniel Boone, Livingstone, or Columbus, to name but a few, the achievements of modern adventurers pale into insignificance.

Journalism and cinematography have made adventure cheap and gaudy, but the true adventurers still exist, and it is to these men and women that my book is addressed.

I have never done more than nibble round the edges of true adventure ; my wanderings have always been restrained by caution and dislike of personal suffering, but I believe I have the adventurer's liking for hard effort and difficult undertakings, and from these things romance is born.

From the stories in this book it will be rightly concluded that I am a believer in the simpler life ; I would rather walk than ride, and rather ride than be carried. To me the grass is the finest bed and appetite the best relish. It saddens me to think that these pleasures are seldom given a fair trial.

Every year hundreds of people go hunting in East Africa at a cost of thousands of pounds. It has been my job to pilot some of these parties and to outfit others, and in each case the keynote of the whole business has been luxury.

Scores of servants, cases of rich food and wines, comfortable transport, and every appliance to minimise effort and hardship, are the adjuncts of the African safari. Many of these people are in poor health ; years of over-feeding and comfort have undermined their constitutions, but when they have the opportunity of regaining health and vigour they will not avail themselves of it.

So well advertised has the luxurious safari become in Europe and America that it is associated with millionaires and noblemen ; no one contemplates undertaking such a holiday without wealth to afford it.

In contradiction of these beliefs I assert that a safari can be made at a cost of twenty pounds per month exclusive of the cost of licences, and in the final chapter of this book I explain how it can be done. This sort of holiday is not for the sybarite but for the adventurer and, should he undertake it, he will find that there are plenty of thrills to be had and plenty of difficulties to be overcome without wasting his nervous energy in the air or on the racing track. He will also discover the joy of simplicity and the healthy advantages of living naturally in close contact with nature.

In support of my arguments I will declare that I have never suffered an ache or pain on these safari, excepting when I penetrated into districts known to be malarial ; and, in my experience, the harder the life the greater the pleasure.

A long walk is no hardship to a postman ; a night in

the wet is small discomfort for a sailor ; whereas either of these experiences might seriously injure a millionaire company promoter ; so that unless you have the hardihood of a postman and a sailor I do not recommend you to try safari in my way. But if you have health and strength and a few hundred pounds to spare you may go to Africa and live the life I describe in these pages, and my good wishes go with you.

C. T. STONEHAM.

NEVER.

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Wanderings in Wild Africa

CHAPTER I

EARLY EXPERIENCES

I DID not learn very much about game during the East African Campaign, but I learnt one thing: that it is not much to be feared. Our greatest danger was from the enemy; risk of damage from wild beasts was a secondary consideration. Familiarity breeds contempt; after a time we disregarded such creatures as lions, rhinoceros, and elephants: they seemed more anxious to avoid than to attack us.

When men stand out alone on sentry-go in the dark bush, surrounded by the creatures of the night, and find themselves immune from attack, they learn that man has little to fear from the beasts if he shows no wish to harm them. To my knowledge, my regiment, the 25th Fusiliers, lost only one man from animal ferocity during the whole of the campaign.

This was a Rhodesian named Pearce. He was on sentry at Kajiado, and in the course of his first watch he noticed a lion hanging about. He told his relief about it, advising the man not to feel worried as the lion would not hurt him. On Pearce's second watch, the lion sprang upon him and mauled him severely. He managed to drive his sheath knife into it, and eventually it went away and died in the bush, but Pearce also died later from his injuries. He is buried in Kajiado cemetery.

There was another incident which came under my personal observation. At Maktau I had charge of native scouts. One day we were going through the bush in extended order, expecting to encounter the enemy at any moment. I had given orders that no one should shoot unless obliged to do so, for we did not wish to discover our presence to the Germans. The native on my right was a Christian and an excellent boy who acted as my cook. Both he and I saw the spoor of a rhinoceros leading into some thick bush ahead; he signed to me and pointed. I paid no attention to the warning, thinking that the stupid animal would clear off when he heard us, but when we came within fifty yards of its retreat, it suddenly charged out at us.

Ali ran between me and the rhino, at the same time throwing his fez in the animal's face. To my astonishment it turned off after him and pursued him in a half circle.

I had been told, repeatedly, that a rhinoceros runs straight and is thus an easy beast to dodge, so I stood gaping at the spectacle of the huge creature pursuing my preserver, thinking that the boy knew more about it than I did and would certainly make his escape.

Ali ran in a circle, and when he had completed half of it the rhino was close behind him. I expected to witness some expert trick which would confuse and baffle the beast, but Ali slipped and fell and the rhino passed over him. One of its hind feet struck the boy behind the shoulder, kicking him along the ground. He sustained a broken shoulder, breast-bone, and ribs, and his face was torn open by contact with the rough ground. The rhino went on and disappeared in the bush. In six months the native recovered from these injuries, which would certainly have killed a European.

This episode convinced me that the rhinoceros, if

he is close enough to see his enemy, will pursue him remorselessly. I remember no other instances of unprovoked attack by animals during the war.

At Maktau we used to lie out in the bush on piquet a mile from the camp. The Germans were very clever at sniping our sentries on these occasions; some of their experienced hunters would search all night for a chance to catch a British soldier unprepared and put a bullet through his head.

When I was on one of these jobs I used to sit down in the middle of a bush with my rifle across my knees, straining my ears and eyes for signs that the destroyer was at hand. At such times I saw lions, leopards, and many hyenas; they all scouted round to see what I was, but I never moved a muscle for fear I might be observed by a sniper lurking in the bushes.

It was nervy work, listening to the rustling progress of some creature through the undergrowth behind one and trying, by the sense of hearing alone, to discover whether it was a harmless beast or a malignant enemy. I found that lions and leopards were indeed harmless, they never offered me any trouble.

We built an enormous thorn fence, called a boma, across the railway line at Maktau, and fitted it with a gate through which the trains could pass. Beside the gate was a pulpit of sandbags in which stood a sentry looking out over the thorn nyika.

One night, when the Baluchis were on piquet, a German officer approached the gate and, in a voice of authority, summoned the sentry. The Indian on guard poked his head over the sandbags, saying: "Atcha sahib!" He received a bullet through the head for his politeness.

After that we dug a pit under the boma, in which the

sentry could stand with his eyes level with the ground and his head screened from view by the thorns. From this vantage point on moonlight nights one could see nocturnal animals strolling about; it was like being in an unfenced zoo.

I was in charge of that piquet one night when the sentry woke me to say there was someone calling outside the boma. The four of us climbed up into the sandbagged turret and stared out into the darkness. Above the soughing of the night breeze one could hear a faint voice calling: "Sentry! Sentry!"

We had received strict instructions to shoot anyone approaching our post; I felt sure we were being invited to give away our position to the enemy.

The voice went on calling, like a lost soul out in the lonely thorn bush; we strained our eyes, seeing nothing but the bushes, which always appear to move at night. You fix your eyes on a dark shadow, striving to make out what it is; presently it begins to shift from side to side, backwards and forwards . . . it is all very puzzling and disturbing.

At last one of us saw something like a man. We watched it anxiously and all came to the conclusion that it *was* a man.

"Take aim, all together," I whispered, "and when I say 'fire' let him have it."

The volley split the darkness with streaks of flame and shattered the silence with an avalanche of echoes. There was no more crying in the bush that night.

In the morning we learned that an unfortunate R.E. officer had broken his car in trying to get to Voi, and had sought refuge at Maktau. He had been afraid to approach the boma and had wandered about in the bush all night calling to the sentry. Our target had been



THE END OF A HUNT

a tree stump, and several of us had hit it. That officer had encountered many wild beasts in the night but none offered to harm him.

I was hunting meat once at Longido, when I came round the corner of a kopje and saw a lioness playing with two cubs in the morning sunlight. She stared straight at me from a distance of fifty yards but she made no movement. One cub was playing with her tufted tail, which she jerked about for his amusement. I stood watching them for some minutes and the lioness never took her eyes off me. Then she stood up, still staring intently. I thought it time to go, and I went back round the kopje by the way I had come.

At Elephant's Skull I was one of a party of seven men left to guard a river which the Germans used for water supply when carrying out raids on our communications. The stream came down from the mountain in a series of cascades, but when it reached the hot thorn-desert it was absorbed by the thirsty soil almost immediately. We made a little round boma, about waist high, and in this we took up our quarters.

This was the heart of the game reserve and I have never seen so many flies in my life. They crawled all over us all day, and we had to pick them off our faces, for they would not be scared into flying away.

Having lived on half-rations for many months we decided to do ourselves well; we excavated an anthill, made an oven out of a petrol-tin, and thus roasted our meat. The flies committed suicide in the oven to such an extent that we ate at least as much fly-meat as buck-meat. The pests flew into one's mouth after the food, they crawled into eyes and ears—it was purgatory.

In these huge game districts the animals swing their heads up and down continually, like clockwork toys.

The cloud of flies round them is visible at a hundred yards' range.

When night fell the flies suspended their activities and the mosquitoes commenced theirs. Such luxuries as mosquito nets were unknown in the first years of the campaign ; one had to pull a blanket over one's head and stifle throughout the tropic night.

Little is known of the sufferings of the men who fought in East Africa ; these were minor annoyances. Needless to say we all had malaria and dysentery. It may not be generally realised that men may become so inured to these diseases that months pass before the patient succumbs to them. On the big trek down into Tanganyika most of my regiment had slight dysentery all the time and recurring malaria every three weeks.

At Elephant's Skull they made me hunter to the camp ; it was my job to keep up the meat supply and I was excused piquet duty at night. That suited me very well ; I loved exploring and watching the game.

One night I did not want to sleep, and offered to sit up on guard until midnight. I made up a huge fire under the thorn tree in the middle of our little boma and sat there smoking and thinking.

After a time I heard a snoring noise coming from the side of the boma. I concluded that one of our men was sleeping there, but I was amazed at the power of his snoring. So powerful was it that I became interested and decided to find out who was making this extraordinary noise ; I had never heard a man snore in such a way.

I walked out of a gap in the thorns and began to make a circuit of the camp, keeping close to the boma so that I could see everything within it. The snoring had stopped, but when I reached the spot from which it had emanated I came upon two pairs of bright red eyes.

A lion's eyes reflect the light like danger signals ; a lion stands over four feet at the shoulder ; these eyes were level with my waist.

I moved backward until I felt the thorns against my legs ; then I jumped over the boma and returned to the comfort of the fire.

The lions began to prowl round the boma, peering in at me through the gaps. I counted seven of them. Periodically they snored ; it was my first experience of this peculiar sound. This is the so called " purring " of the lion. I do not think it is purring as we understand it ; I think it is conversation.

When the lions had been investigating the camp for some minutes and showed no intention of going away I became alarmed and cast about in my mind for some explanation of their persistence.

In the tree above my head was the carcass of a thomson's gazelle I had shot that morning ; directly I thought of it I knew what had brought the visitors. I took it by the hind legs, dragged it to the boma, and threw it over. The lions carried it away a few hundred yards and devoured it.

They did not bother us again that night, but the next night they were about in the bush before darkness fell. We had no meat in camp and as soon as they discovered this fact they departed and we received no further visits from them during the remainder of our stay.

I relate these experiences to show how I began to understand something about the wild life of Africa, and insensibly to lose my fear of it. For three years I lived in close contact with dangerous animals, and had little or no protection from them. During that time I was not attacked by anything but a rhinoceros, which I killed by a lucky shot when it was within a few yards of me.

At the end of the war I had no more fear of the African night than a town dweller has of a lighted street. I was accustomed to sleeping alone on the ground in bush or veld; I moved about freely at night without a lantern or a weapon. A man-eating lion or a rogue elephant might have killed me, but such beasts are rare; as rare as footpads in the lighted streets of a city.

I had several encounters with big game during the war; I did a little shooting but always for meat, and lions and rhinoceros are not good to eat. During this period I had only one really narrow escape from death at the teeth or claws of beasts. I had almost forgotten the episode.

The regiment, or what remained of it, captured Buiko, a station on the Pangani River, in German territory. We were starving, having had nothing to eat for five days. An American, named Rashleigh, and myself looted a deserted Greek store and found some fishing line and hooks. We made our way down through the jungle to the river.

The Pangani is a deep, swift stream, running through a mile-wide belt of thick forest. It was difficult to approach the water because of the bush and the steep banks, but eventually I found a spot where a sand-spit jutted out into the current. The spit was about eight feet wide and fifty feet long; where it joined the bank a fallen tree, a mass of branches and tangled monkey rope made a barricade. I selected this as my fishing place; Rashleigh went on to find another.

Climbing over the fallen tree was difficult, I left my rifle behind to facilitate my progress. Arrived at the sand-spit I found the ground loose underfoot, but sufficiently stable to support a large tree which grew at the extreme end of my little peninsula. Against this I

leant, baited my hook with a grasshopper, and began to fish. I tied the end of my line to a branch and gave myself up to reflection.

Presently I heard a curious noise like the lapping of a large dog. I looked round interestedly ; I knew that the river was full of crocodiles, and I suspected that this noise emanated from one of them. For some time it did not occur to me to look behind the tree against which I leaned ; when I did so I saw a big crocodile resting its paws on the roots, staring at me. Its eyes were yellowish brown and more diabolical in expression than anything I could have imagined. For a moment we stared at each other ; then the saurian backed off into deep water.

I breathed a sigh of relief, but the next moment was horrified to see the brute come surging round to the edge of the sand-spit and begin to climb out. I ran to get past it and make my escape to the bank, but by the time I arrived near to the reptile he had emerged so far from the water that I despaired of passing him. I ran back to try and climb the growing tree ; and here the crocodile made a foolish mistake in his tactics. Had he climbed out of the water and followed me down the sand-spit he would most certainly have caught me, for the tree was smooth, as big as my body, and unscaleable ; but thinking, I suppose, that I should plunge into the river like a buck and swim for shore, he elected to back off into deep water and come surging after me like a torpedo boat destroyer. He tried to climb out again just behind me, where I made futile efforts to scale the tree. I rushed past him and ran for the windfall, but my feet sank deep in the soft ground and by the time I reached it the crocodile had swum along and arrived there before me.

I felt sure he would get me as I was forcing my way through the mass of boughs and creepers on the fallen trunk ; I dared not risk it, but decided to have another go at the growing tree. The crocodile backed off and swam after me, again endeavouring to land immediately behind me. I dodged him again and was again headed off from the windfall.

How many times I ran up and down that sand-spit I do not know ; I think it was ten, but it seems probable that I made the trip not more than four times.

The crocodile was a fool ; if he had climbed out on the sand he could have knocked me off it with a blow of his tail, for he was at least twenty feet long.

Although in great distress of mind, I stuck to dry land where, it seemed to me, I had a chance which would be denied me in the water. The channel between the spit and the bank was not more than fifteen feet wide at one point, but I could not face the risk of plunging into it, even though my enemy would have been obliged to circumnavigate the spit to reach me. His speed in the water was prodigious ; much faster than my running speed in the sand.

At last I got away from him ; either he was slower than usual or I received a better start and made swifter going in the race for the windfall, for I reached it ahead of him and fairly threw myself among the branches, through which I scrambled to safety. I snatched up my rifle and climbed back on to the trunk, to see the crocodile lying out with his nose and eyes above the water. I took a shot at him and he disappeared from view, but whether I hit him or not I cannot say.

Some minutes afterwards, Rashleigh, attracted by the report of the rifle, arrived to hear my story. He stood on the tree-trunk keeping guard while I ventured out

on the sand-spit again to collect my line. On the end of it was a large barbel. We exchanged the fish with Mr. Cherry Kearton for a joint of a wart-hog which he had shot the day before.

In 1917 I was invalided to South Africa, where I was told by three doctors that I had not long to live. I had survived over forty severe attacks of malaria, dysentery and shell shock, but I had become so debilitated that I hated everyone and everything, and desired nothing more than to bury myself in the wilderness far away from men and cities. After some months of illness and depression I managed to get into the South African Mechanical Transport and was again sent to East Africa.

The fact that a man in my condition was able to pass the medical examination for recruits may seem surprising, but it must be remembered that in 1918 they were willing to accept anyone who was able to walk, and of course I was careful to deny any previous service and to represent myself as a man who had spent all his life on an office stool. Still, one would have thought that the doctor would have detected valvular disease of the heart, which was one of my ailments.

When I arrived in Dar-es-Salaam, I was in the grip of malaria. I had become so used to this condition that I was able to make a fair pretence of carrying on with a temperature of 103, although when it went beyond that I was usually prostrated.

I found a very different war from the one I had been accustomed to. Everyone was supplied with bed and mosquito net, and orders that these should be used were strictly enforced.

A number of natives applied to us for jobs as personal boys and I engaged one smart-looking fellow, Juma by

name. He told me that he had been servant to a German officer during the fighting on the Rufiji, and I badly wanted to know how Von Lettow's men were enabled to survive the ravages of malaria in that pestilential district. Juma assured me that the "washenzi" of those parts had a medicine, made from roots, which cured malaria like magic. He said that he had kept his master fit by administering this concoction to him. He soon observed that I had fever, although my companions did not suspect it, being quite content in their ignorance with the explanation that I had a headache.

I was afraid of being sent back to the Union if my physical condition became known, which it soon would be if a doctor got hold of me. Juma offered to cure my fever with some of his medicine, of which he had a small quantity remaining. I refused, telling him that I would not dream of swallowing any filthy native decoction of spider's and frog's blood or whatever it might contain. When he brought me my tea that evening it tasted peculiar and I taxed him with doctoring it, but he stoutly denied the charge. All tea tastes horrible when one has malaria, so I gave him the benefit of the doubt.

The next morning I awoke feeling better. I had no more malaria for over three years but before the end of that period when a doctor took a sample of my blood he said it was full of malaria germs.

Whether Juma dosed me or not I do not know, but he was an astonishingly good boy and I always remember him with thankfulness.

I was put to work driving a transport car between Dodoma and Iringa. The road was supposed to be infested by man-eating lions, and I always drove with a loaded rifle beside me, but I never saw one of these beasts.



WART HOG

One night I ran into a pack of large, spotted, hunting dogs—the most savage and dangerous creatures of the wild. I have never seen their kind before or since ; they were just like the Cape hunting dog and by no means to be confused with the smaller bushy-coated animals of the Kenya forests.

On another occasion I came round a corner into a large pack of baboons. I was ascending a very steep hill in low gear and dared not stop for fear I should never be able to start again. The pack scampered off among the rocks, but one baby baboon remained, paralysed with fright, in the middle of the narrow track. His mother looked back and, seeing her offspring's danger, yelled with anguish, came racing back and picked the youngster from under my front wheels. She tucked him upside down under her arm and galloped off, stopping every now and then to spank his posterior, at the same time scolding him at the top of her voice.

Baboons are curious animals ; they turn over rocks and stones in search of grubs, and should one find a snake he runs off screaming and swearing, with the whole pack after him, looking back to utter jibes and insults like a party of urchins pursued by a policeman. If you wound a baboon he presses his hands to the wound, groaning and sighing like a man.

I have shot one only ; I think I would rather not shoot another. Some men have no scruples about shooting all the baboons they can, on account of the damage done to the crops by these destructive beasts, but it is rather like shooting schoolboys for raiding an orchard.

Man is pitiless where self-interest is concerned. I knew a settler who, having shot a reed buck through the back, and having no knife with him, put the animal into his car and drove several miles to his farm to cut his

throat rather than use a sixpenny bullet to finish it off. He was of opinion that the animal did not suffer much physically, and its mental suffering made no appeal to a mind incapable of sympathy or imagination.

It is certain that the gazelle experience the greatest terror when wounded and unable to evade the approach of the hunter. The expression in the eyes of a wounded buck is horrible enough to haunt one for days, but custom decrees that these animals should be finished off by the most painful method of slaughtering—that of cutting their throats.

It is quite simple to approach a wounded animal from behind and shoot it through the head, and if a rifle bullet is too expensive to "waste," the sportsman may carry a .25 calibre automatic pistol, which is neither heavy nor bulky and is very cheap to use. Hunters have numerous objections to this humane method of killing wounded beasts, chief among which are these—that the head skin is spoilt for a trophy by the mark of the bullet, and that some natives will not eat meat which has not been "chinja" according to the Mohammedan practice.

Personally I have little sympathy with religious superstition, more especially when it is professed by people who observe none other of the formalities enjoined upon them by their creeds. For instance, the Mohammedan must not eat meat unless it has been "chinja" by one of the faithful, but if his bwana, a Christian, performs the rite, the East African native is satisfied that the meat is lawful !

My boys had to put up with the carcasses of animals killed in a humane manner, and if they did not like it they could go without meat. Many of my buck trophies were shot in the head with a .25 bullet, and it would

puzzle a stranger to find the mark in the mounted specimen. Imagine the tricks resorted to in killing a wounded animal without leaving a mark on the neck or head, and without using a bullet !

It reminds me of occasions when I have seen tenderly nurtured lady tourists bargaining with natives for the skins of the hyrax, that jolly little fellow who lives in the high forests and sings his nightly songs to the misty African moon. Those women always preferred the unblemished skins and paid better prices for them. I wonder if some of the beauties who disport themselves in their Tanganyika hyrax furs in the cities of Europe and America realise that the skins they wear so daintily were torn from the living bodies of their rightful owners by callous Wanderobo, and that it was they and their kind who, by their demand for unblemished skins, instituted the practice. I wonder sometimes if they would care if they did know these horrors, as long as they did not have to witness them.

I will do my little bit for the hyrax and the leopard ; not by appealing to the humanity of the vain and commercially-minded, but by the cunning device of safeguarding their interests. Know then, my friends, that we wise ones never buy a skin without a mark on it, for the easiest manner of killing these animals is by poisoning them, and a poisoned skin cannot be dressed without all its hair coming out. For this reason you may see the poisoner shooting holes in the skins of dead leopards, to deceive the buyer. Hyraces are seldom poisoned, the Wanderobo cannot afford such civilised luxuries as strychnine and cyanide ; but still you can never be sure ; so don't buy any more "flawless" skins on the station platforms of the Cape to Cairo route.

CHAPTER II

SAFARI MOJA

IN 1923 I was living in the township of Nanyuki, one hundred and fifty miles north of Nairobi, on the foothills of Mount Kenia. In those days that district was "wild and woolly." There were a fair number of settlers scattered over a large expanse of veld; communication with civilisation was always difficult and sometimes impossible.

My friend and partner, Mr. Walter Knight, had just returned from a holiday in England; we decided to have a safari to celebrate his return. We took ten porters, a cook, a pony, and a mule. Our equipment consisted of an old and "holey" tent, a tarpaulin for the boys, bacon and flour, tea and sugar, a few tinned delicacies, and plenty of posho (mealie meal) for our boys.

These were of the Northern Kikuyu and Meru tribes, who speak a similar language and have similar customs. One custom is that they will not eat the meat of a wild animal. They say that at one period in their history a dreadful disease broke out amongst them which would not yield to any treatment. When half the people were dead the remainder sought the advice of a powerful wizard who told them to eschew the meat of all wild things. This they did and the disease vanished from amongst them. They have never eaten venison since.

The Masai share the superstition of their enemies,

for what reason I know not, but certain it is that the prevalence of game in Likipia and the Masai country is primarily due to its immunity from persecution.

Our porters carried our blanket rolls, our chop-boxes, and their own posho. They were stout fellows who had been some years in my employ ; they carried loads of 60 lbs. for thirty miles a day. Nowadays when the "safari boy" expects to be carted about in a motor-truck, provided with boots and a mosquito net, such stalwarts would be hard to find. Walter was armed with a borrowed .450 rifle of French make ; it took three cartridges in the magazine, and though clumsy was an accurate, hard-hitting weapon. I had a Männlicher-Schoenauer .375 with which I had done very little shooting.

On the first day we made thirty miles to the Nanyuki River at a point a mile from its junction with the Guasso Nyiro. We lay down for the night without pitching the tent, for there seemed little likelihood of rain.

This piece of country is high-veld, 6000 feet above sea-level. It is cool and healthy ; at morning and evening it is most invigorating. During the day the sun's heat is severe, but in the shade it is always pleasant. The grass is coarse and withered, barely hiding the sandy red earth ; there are trees along the river, and out on the veld a few thorn bushes cling to life despite the ravages of red ants which infest them. These thorns are a kind of mimosa ; they produce hard pods as big as chestnuts, upon which are three or more inch-long spikes. The ants make tiny holes in the pods and eat out the pith, so that there is a hollow cavity through which the veld wind whistles eerily. The strange, sad singing of the wind in these bushes has given them the name of "whistling thorns." The Laikipia Plains are

covered with them, densely in some places, sparsely in others, and where they grow thickly it is exceedingly difficult to preserve a sense of direction when riding through them.

I was once invited to spend a week-end with a settler who lived in one of these thorn forests, the object of my visit being to shoot lions. On the afternoon of my arrival we rode out to prospect the country and came upon the body of a full-grown bull giraffe. There was no mark upon the skin, nothing to show what had killed the beast. My friend desired the hide ; I agreed to ride back to the farm and send boys out to him for the skinning and transport of the trophy.

When I had done this, the settler's wife informed me that there was no meat in the house and begged of me to shoot a buck. I walked out into the thorns as the evening was falling and about a mile from the house I came upon a small herd of thomson's gazelle feeding in a clearing.

The "tommy" is splendid eating, tasting rather like lean mutton. Like all the gazelle he has not an ounce of fat on him, but this deficiency may be supplied by larding the joint with bacon.

I bowled over a young buck, hoisted it into a tree, and started back to the house to bring a native to carry in the kill. I had walked for some time among the clustering thorn trees when it occurred to me that I had no very clear idea of my direction. The sun was setting but the ten-feet high trees prevented me from seeing it ; the bush grew gloomy and full of shadows. I knew that if I missed the farm there was nothing to prevent me from trekking on into the wilderness for evermore.

Vainly I cast about for some landmark, some peculiarity of growth or configuration, which I could be sure of

recognising. It was all the same ; there were a dozen scenes to strike the cord of memory but I knew too much about the bush to place any reliance in these appearances. It became quite dark and the grunting of lions was all about me. I moved in circles, studying the lie of the country, trying to reason out where a man would be likely to build his house in such a place.

At last, after hours of wandering, I noticed a sort of winding avenue among the thorns which I thought would be the route I should choose were I to traverse this country with a waggon. I crawled on hands and knees, feeling amongst the grass stems, and presently found the old rut of a waggon wheel. There were two choices of direction ; I made one, and within five hundred yards I came to the farmhouse. That is how easy it is to lose yourself in the thorn country.

To return to our safari. We had no thick stuff to contend with round our camp ; the ground was open, the bushes scattered. When evening fell we squatted on the ground and, using the chop-boxes as tables, made a meal of cold beef, bread, and tea. Then we lighted our pipes, made our beds, and settled down to enjoy the scenery.

In the east the snowy peak of Mount Kenia towered chill and forbidding into the steely-blue sky ; the Loldaiga Hills ran down from the mountain to terminate level with us and a mile or two away. Guinea fowl were chirring down by the river, and spur fowl called to each other from every bush clump. The first stars were showing in the calm, clear sky ; early hyenas howled dismally in the distance.

The veld wind, which blows all day without intermission, usually drops at sundown, leaving a brooding peace upon the countryside, restful and romantic. At

such times the veld with its myriad colours and soft shadowy outlines, the gaunt lonely trees outlined against a remote sky of the hue of a hedge-sparrow's egg, produce a scene of beauty beyond the power of words to describe.

It is apparent that the world is glorious and that only life makes it a place of cruelty and unhappiness, for under that smiling sky and among those dusky shadows, the predatory beasts are abroad; the herbivora stand, anxious and wary, testing the air with quivering nostrils, listening and watching intently for signs of the fanged and clawed demons who will prowl upon the blood trail throughout the night. And we men, taking our ease, enjoying the beauty of the evening, had weapons of destruction within reach of our hands.

In the night I awoke to find my blankets heavy with dew and the bright stars shining down upon us. Down by the stream a leopard was grunting; the hunting roar of a lion sounded up on the open veld. The fire burnt low, a mass of glowing embers; beside it was curled Sally, one of my dogs. She opened a watchful eye at me as I turned upon the hard ground, seeking a comfortable spot for my hip. Bingo, the other dog, lay thirty yards away in the grass as was his habit. He was half Irish wolfhound, half Scotch deerhound; a huge black fellow, stronger and speedier than any dog in Laikipia. He had been my constant companion for the past three years and knew the life of the wilderness as no man will ever know it.

I cast a glance towards the motionless forms of the boys huddled round their dying fire, noticed that my companion was sleeping peacefully and that the animals were grazing at the end of their piquet ropes, and once more lapsed into unconsciousness.

Suddenly there was an uproar, scurrying of feet in the darkness, snarling, and Bingo's wrathful bay waking the echoes. Sally joined him in a rush over the grass, barking furiously. The noise subsided and I heard Bingo return to his post, lying down, sighing contentedly. Walter was sitting up in his blankets nursing his rifle.

"What was it?" he asked.

"Hyenas, probably," I replied, "or maybe a leopard. I heard one grunting a short while ago."

He lay down again and was asleep almost immediately.

There were several of these alarms during the night, but the intruders did not approach near enough to annoy us.

In the first grey light of dawn we bestirred ourselves. It was bitterly cold; everything was saturated with dew. The boys made a fire and put on the kettle for tea; Walter and I went down to the river for a bathe. The water smoked in the chilly air; it was clean and sweet with the bite of frost in it. This river comes straight from the glaciers of Kenia, it had no chance to get warm on its way to us.

Overhanging the stream are tall fever trees. These trees have been described by novelists as eerie, ugly things. They are, in reality, very beautiful. They are of the acacia family, having long vicious spikes and small feathery leaves. The bark is a rich olive green in colour, changing to yellow on the upper sides of the limbs. It is such a bright, vivid colour that one would suppose the tree to be covered with soft, dripping moss. It is supposed that where these trees grow there is malaria; it is a fallacy. The fever thorn grows along the rivers of some of the healthiest country in the world.

That morning while we bathed there were green

parrots in the trees, chattering and screaming, running upside-down under all the branches searching for insects. The river rattled and gurgled among big mossy boulders; everywhere on the banks maidenhair ferns were growing. Some old cedar trees seemed to have crept down from the mountain following the stream. They had a gaunt, storm-stricken appearance, and were thickly festooned with grey lichen . . . "old man's beard." Odin, the Wanderer, in grey cloak and hat, leaves on the mind no more venerable and dignified impression than the Kenya cedar tree.

White men in Africa believe that cold water is bad for them; they say it brings out fever and causes liver complaint. It cannot bring out fever unless the germs of this disease are in the blood; and unless one's liver is rotten with alcohol I fail to see how it can be damaged by cold water. I never lose an opportunity of bathing in the rivers of the African highlands; on the lower levels it is a different matter, there the water contains creeping, crawling things, inimical to man. On the Loita Plains I have shot wilderbeeste with huge white grubs inside their skulls. I am told that these parasites come from the shallow pools out on the veld.

After the bathe we ate bacon and fried bread with considerable appetite. By the time we had finished the meal the sun was above the horizon and its fiery beams were becoming uncomfortably hot. We went for a stroll while the boys packed up; in half an hour we were on the trail again, proceeding along the Nanyuki to the broad Guasso Nyiro.

The veld was covered with steep rocky kopjies, upon which we saw troops of baboons. There were plenty of the common veld creatures about, tommy, granti,

zebra, and Jackson's hartebeeste, but we did not stop for any shooting.

The ford at the big river was sixty yards wide ; on the sand-banks big white storks stood ; in the trees were bands of small blue monkeys. Beyond the river was a farm belonging to a friend of ours, an old Cape Colonial named Lex Smith. He had found malaria there, which caused him to abandon the farm, but he still had some stock on the place herded by natives.

I once crossed the Guasso Nyiro with Lex and his waggons. I should think he is as good a man with an ox-waggon as ever came out of South Africa. He stood on the diselboom, armed with the long whip, urging the leaders down the bank into the swift, breast-high current. They took the water puffing and snorting, Lex screaming at them in inimitable ox-driver fashion. Whenever the span of sixteen animals attempted to deviate from the narrow passage the whip shot out to crack like a rifle beside the ears of the straying leaders, and the delinquent's name would be pronounced in a fiendish yell.

Lex never laid the lash on a beast but the vicious crack of it within six inches of shrinking bovine ears was enough to change an ox into a race-horse. They had no chance to run off into deep water, the whip was like a guiding hand, steering them to safety. Talk about driving a four-in-hand ! I have attempted to drive an ox-waggon myself ; I think one has to be born to it.

Lex started assisting his father at the age of seven. When he wants to get to the other side of a range of mountains he takes his waggons and goes. Most of the roads in North Kenya follow the spoor of his pioneer treks.

On this occasion we occupied his farmhouse for the

night. It was made of dried mud held up by a frame of withies and it was grass-thatched. There were four rooms if I remember rightly. In those days the settlers' houses were constructed in this manner, and very comfortable they were.

Round about Lex's farm the country is hilly and covered with a tangled thorny bush, much like raspberry canes. Of all the abominable undergrowth I have penetrated, this is the worst. The long floppy branches cling to you and remove skin and clothing like strands of barbed wire; there is no shade, and the breeze cannot penetrate to the river valley. Impala, buffalo, and rhinoceros, live in these thickets, where it is extremely difficult to follow them.

On one occasion I was riding out from the farm with my boys when I noticed something like a huge boulder protruding out of the bush on top of a small hill. I could not make out what it was until we were within a hundred yards of it; then I knew it to be the biggest rhinoceros I had ever seen.

The wind was blowing from him to us; I determined to creep right up to him. The boys gathered in a group, holding my pony, while I went forward on foot accompanied by my two dogs, Bingo and Mick. I was carrying a .303 rifle, but had nothing but soft-nosed bullets.

Some hunters maintain that it is possible to kill a rhino with a soft-nosed bullet by shooting him at the base of the throat. A friend told me that he always whistled, which caused the beast to look up, exposing his throat to the bullet. I have no faith in my ability to kill a rhino with a soft-nosed .303 bullet; I have found them difficult enough with a higher powered weapon and solid nickel. In any case I did not want to harm this one, but merely wished to study him.



THE AFRICAN BUFFALO

In those days I never carried a camera ; I went on safari for my own amusement and had no desire to keep records. Besides, photography is expensive, and I never had any money to waste. Still, I have always regretted not being able to photograph that rhino, for he really was a monster, and he almost fed out of my hand. I am comforted by the reflection that it is easy enough to fake such a picture with a smaller specimen in a menagerie.

I crept up to within twenty yards of the beast, my two dogs crouching behind me as they had been trained to do. The next piece of cover lay across an outcrop of rock as bare as the palm of my hand. The rhino had not seen me, he was browsing placidly on a bush. I stole forward on to the flat rocks, my gaze riveted on the great beast, ready to lie prone when he raised his head. Suddenly he did this, and down I went. To my disquiet the rhino began to walk slowly towards me. He came out of the screen of bushes on to the rocks, paused a moment, and then came dawdling on.

Now the rhino is supposed to be semi-blind, but at a distance of ten paces even a rhino can see a man plainly enough. But this animal did not notice me at all ; the last thing he was expecting to find in that spot was a prostrate human being.

As he walked towards me I could see every wrinkle on him ; his eyes had a gentle, contemplative expression which proved to me that the rhino is not naturally a savage animal. When you see the expression in the eyes of a lion or leopard you know what savagery is.

I became very worried about this beast ; I knew he would charge me as soon as he saw me, and though I might dodge him he would rush on down the hill straight into my boys and the pony. It looked very

much as though someone was to be killed before long. I thought about trying the throat shot with my soft bullets, but he carried his head low in front of his chest and my first movement would surely catch his eye and bring him galloping down upon me.

He was just twelve feet from me when I remembered the dogs. I leapt to my feet, snapped my fingers, and made the gesture of throwing a ball, which was the signal for my canine friends to attack. They sprang straight at the rhino barking furiously. At my first movement he had thrown up his head (that fellow had been right about the throat shot) ; I shall never forget the expression of surprise in his eyes, and attitude. Then down went his head and he lunged at the oncoming dogs. They were much too experienced to be caught that way ; they broke round him like a wave round a rock, leaping at his shoulders. The poor bewildered beast spun round after them. I doubt if he realised my presence, so occupied was he with the yelping demons that attacked him.

I had retreated to the cover of the bush from where I watched the rhino turning round and round, stamping and butting at his elusive enemies. Never for an instant did the dogs stop bedeviling him ; they leapt at his feet, head, and flanks, with amazing speed and energy. By now the rhino was really angry ; his eyes were red, his snorting terrible to hear. I began to get alarmed again ; I thought something should be done to drive him away before he selected a route I did not wish him to take. When, in the course of his gyration, his back was towards me I fired a shot into his haunch. I suppose the bullet penetrated about an inch through that thick hide, but it was enough to start the old fellow going. He dashed straight away into the bush with the

dogs after him. It was half an hour before they returned ; they chased him for miles, I expect.

I had another interesting experience at Lex Smith's farm. I arrived there one night with six dogs. Lex had left three of his dogs there, so that there was a formidable pack of trained hunters to protect the place that night.

Being very tired I turned in early. About midnight I was awakened by a terrific uproar outside my window. I jumped out of bed and peered through the window-glass into the night. There was a full moon, which means that there was as much illumination as there is in Piccadilly or Broadway when the electrics are on.

Standing with his back to an outhouse, surrounded by the pack of raving dogs, was a big maned lion. His lip was curled back in a ferocious snarl, his tail twitched to and fro ; he dared his assailants to come on and see what would happen to them, but the dogs had no intention of coming within reach of those terrible jaws ; they stayed five yards away, feinting at attack and using all their energies in heaping threats and abuse upon the interloper.

The noise upset the lion greatly ; one could see that his nerves were becoming frazzled by the clamour and the constant movement of his foes. Several of these dogs were terriers, and there is nothing more hysterical and excitable in nature than a pack of terriers baying a lion. It was too much for simba ; he uttered a terrific roar, dashed at the dogs, who scattered right and left, and beat an ignominious retreat into the bush. The dogs did not pursue him far ; they knew where their duty lay and for the rest of the night they patrolled the farmyard, boasting and quarrelling among themselves.

We spent one night at the farm, and the next morning

set off down the Guasso Nyiro. It was the end of the dry season ; an extensive grass fire had swept this part of the country, and excepting along the river bank there was not a blade of grass to be seen. The thorn bushes had, as usual, escaped this holocaust, but even they were looking a bit dispirited.

Distributed over the veld were white storks, and secretary birds, still ruminating upon the glutinous feasts of rodents which the fire had provided for them. It is a fine sight to see them standing along the edge of the advancing flames, a long line of white and grey sentinels, waiting for snakes, mice, and such small fry, to be driven within range of their ready beaks.

One day I saw a secretary bird killing a snake. The reptile was about three feet long ; it struck at the bird repeatedly, but the destroyer shielded himself with his big wings, and his feet and beak were busy at every onset, so that in a few minutes he had reduced the snake to a condition of squirming impotence.

These birds are protected. One frequently sees them stalking over the veld, very dignified in black breeches and grey coat, with the slanting head feathers—looking just like a quill pen stuck behind the ear of an amanuensis—which has given the bird his name. They are fierce, unfriendly creatures, and will hiss and threaten with wings and beak any person who approaches them. In size they are as big as a wild goose and stand much higher on their legs. They go about in pairs, but several couples may be found in close proximity.

In the evening all the white storks rose to circle majestically in the eye of the sun. They gleamed, dazzlingly when the light was reflected from their plumage. A calm cloudless sky, a fiery westering sun, and long lines of white sailing birds ; the black im-

mensity of the burnt veld, with mysterious shadows clustering against bush and rock ; the silver river chuckling amongst its secret caverns—these are the surroundings and conditions for a good camp, but our camp that night was an unlucky one.

We had travelled all day along the river hoping to find grazing for the riding animals, but the best that offered was a grassy bench among some rocks close to the water. Here we off-saddled, erected the tent and, while the boys prepared food, Walter and I took a dip in the river. We had come down into an enormous valley ; across the river, a couple of miles away, was a steep escarpment ; on our side were rolling hills, culminating in a ridge of high land.

This valley was becoming increasingly bushy the further we entered it. The clearings of burnt grass-land grew smaller ; there were rocky outcrops everywhere, and dense thickets of thorn and bramble. Across the black ground the trails showed white and distinct, and one of these which we had been following all day was the old Somali foot-track leading to Masabit and the North, a relic of the old slave trading days. The Somali path plunged blithely through the thickets, but save for this narrow communication we were hemmed in on every side.

I do not like camping in such a place, where cover is afforded for every beast, where a boy gathering firewood may disturb a rhinoceros or python, but there was no grass elsewhere and we were obliged to put up with the situation.

After our meal lions began roaring near by. In the denuded state of the country they would have hard work to find game and harder work to stalk it ; the moon was young and it would be simple for them to

approach the pony in the later part of the night. I had a feeling there was trouble brewing, but the trouble was of an unlooked-for kind.

We turned into our blankets, one on each side of the tent. I wore my cardigan, for the night was cold. We had been riding all day ; we were weary and sleep was not long in coming to us. Some time in the night I awoke and moved. Immediately I heard a faint singing noise, oddly familiar. Half-asleep, I wondered idly what that noise was, and then I felt sure it was the alarm signal of safari ants when they are disturbed.

The safari ants, or "siafu" to give them their Swahili name, are terrible things. They live in holes in the ground on the veld, round which they clear a patch of ground of every living and growing thing. Periodically they go on trek ; I don't know why. Sometimes they make for water ; sometimes they just seem to get tired of one locality and decide to move to another. They are very active during the rains and at these seasons one crosses their lines of march continually. They move in a thick stream, as thick as a rope, and soon they wear a trough for themselves in the soft earth. At night they frequently rest in these runways, clinging to each other in masses as swarming bees do, but they also travel at night, and one can never be sure which they will do.

Most of them are small red insects, about the size of grains of rice, but here and there a great hideous fellow marches with the throng, a demon nearly an inch long armed with formidable pincers.

All of them bite, and what they start they finish. They kill everything that cannot get out of their path—fowls, puppies, kittens—and I am prepared to believe they would kill an elephant if he could not escape ; there are usually enough of them to do it.

Wood ash or lime is the only defence against siafu. Cudenhoove says that corrosive sublimate discourages them, but I never had sufficient of this substance to waste it on killing ants.

When I recognised that singing noise I trembled ; I feared the worst. When I put my hand up to my head my fears were confirmed ; they were all over me, in my hair, pyjamas, and sweater, and when I moved every ant that could find a piece of flesh to bite caught hold of it and worried it.

Yelling the alarm I jumped up and rushed out on to the veld, stripping off my clothes as I ran. Walter followed ; they had not visited him in large numbers, but he had plenty to keep him occupied for a time. We stood stark naked in the chilly air, picking ants from our shivering bodies. They were not difficult to find, each one had his bite before he was torn loose and despatched. The effect of these bites is rather like an electric shock, it causes a leap and an exclamation.

We continued jumping and cursing for several minutes until the last ant had done his worst and died fighting, then we roused out the boys, got a lamp, and inspected the tent. By the dim light of a Deitz lantern we could discern a stream of siafu crossing the floor of the tent.

We pulled our blankets out into the open, made up the fire, and sat round it, hunting for ants in the wool. It took over an hour to eradicate most of the pests from our bedding, and during all this time we were naked in the cold air.

Satisfied at last, we moved out on to the veld, fifty yards from the tent, and once more composed ourselves to slumber. But it is tricky work finding ants in grey woollen blankets by lantern light, and many had

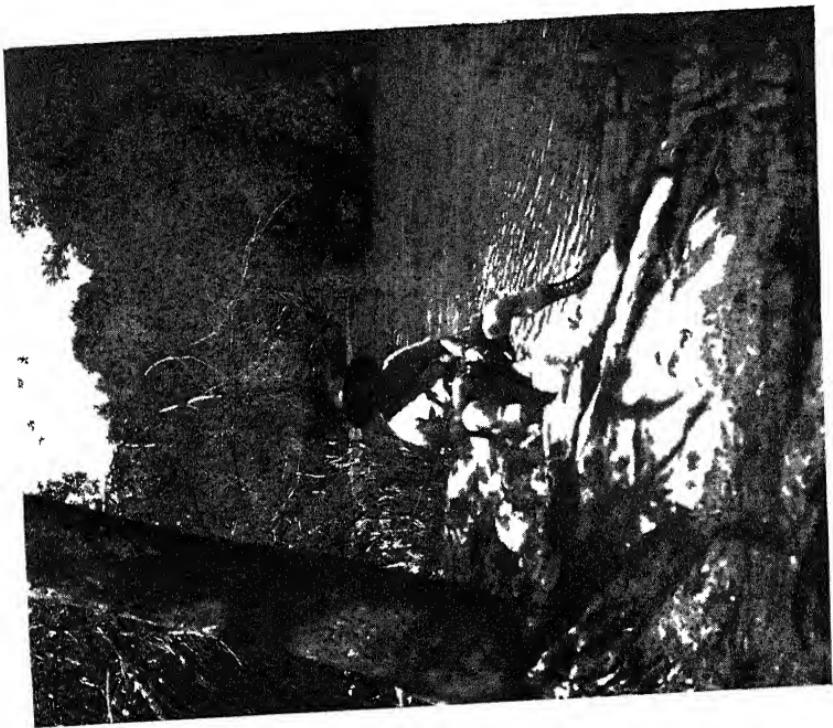
been missed. As these discovered the bodies of their enemies they took hold of them, and then there was a rush of hands to the tormented spot. I think the last of my ants bit and died at about four o'clock in the morning, and from then until dawn I slept.

Neither of us felt very energetic the next day. We struck camp and pushed on along the Somali trail, which penetrated ever thicker belts of bush, until we came to a ford at which the trail crossed to the other side of the river. We were so thirsty that at this place we drank copious draughts of water, which caused me to name the crossing "Gallon Ford." On this day's march there had been one or two unfortunate incidents. The sharp edges of the burnt stubble had lacerated the dogs' feet until they could scarcely walk, and Bingo was particularly unlucky, he left a blood spoor, like a wounded buck, on the trail. At about two o'clock in the afternoon he could no longer travel. I made an attempt to carry him on my mule, but he was too big and clumsy to lie across the animal's withers and I had to set him afoot again. A few minutes later we missed him and he did not rejoin us.

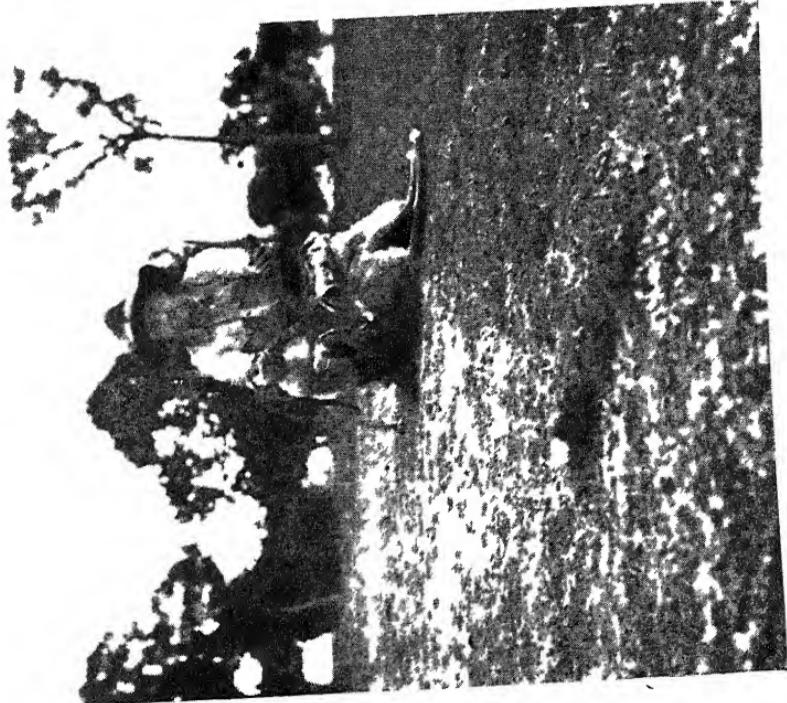
It was intensely hot in the valley. Dogs have a cunning method of travelling in such conditions. They trot forward ahead of their master for fifty yards to lie under a bush until he has passed them and gained a fifty-yard lead, when they repeat the manœuvre. Both Bingo and Sally had been doing this all the morning, and when the big hound was missed I concluded that he was lying up until the cool evening would allow him to travel on my trail with less discomfort.

A few miles later we observed two impala stags before us. One possessed a fine head and, as we required meat, we decided to shoot it. We stalked to within a

WAITING FOR A CROCODILE



AVERAGE IMPALA



hundred yards ; I took careful aim at the buck and missed it clean ! I was very downhearted. To miss an easy shot at the beginning of a safari generally means bad shooting during the whole trip. Why people have spells of bad shooting I do not know, but everybody has them. It is like a golfer being " off his game."

We pitched camp on the opposite side of Gallon Ford, and as soon as we had consumed several mugs of tea we started out to explore that bank of the river, working back in the direction from which we had come. We reasoned that the Narok, a tributary of the Guasso Nyiro, flowed down to join the big river a few miles beyond our camp. That meant that we were between two rivers lying a mile or so apart, and the escarpment gave a good indication of where the Narok should be. The strip of land on which we strolled was fairly open, burnt black like everything else, and dotted with low thorn bushes. We passed traces of rhinoceros and saw many spur fowl, but no buck ; they had left the district in search of grazing.

At dusk we came down to the big river at a game ford and I suggested we should cross and make our way back to camp along the Somali trail. I waded into the water holding rifle, boots, socks, and puttees above my head. The stream was swift, waist-deep, and treacherous, for one never knew at what moment one might encounter a hole in its sandy bed. On the further side I could see the game trail winding up the precipitous banks under large shady trees.

Big rivers like the Guasso Nyiro become much bigger in the rains ; in the driest weather they shrink to half their normal size. It follows that for most of the year the stream is bordered by strips of sandy beach, about twenty yards wide, behind which are the

cliff-like banks of the river-bed. These banks are usually thirty feet high or more ; on top of them grow big fever thorns and hardwoods, whose roots protrude from the bank, seeking moisture in the stream-bed. When one is in the river-bed it is like being in a railway cutting eighty yards wide, with dense bush and towering trees enclosing it, so that there is no view of the veld above. Periodically, along the rivers, the game finds fords, or "drifts" as we call them. They make broad paths to these, and up above on the veld one may see these main paths radiating like the leaves of a fan into innumerable smaller trails leading away into the thorns. This description applies to all rivers of fifty and more yards in breadth throughout the bush-veld of East Africa.

It will be understood that animals drinking may be easily surprised by a watcher on the river bank ; the noise of running water is in their ears ; there is no breeze to carry the scent of an enemy, and their field of vision is very limited. Herds of buck leave sentries posted on the bank to warn them of danger while drinking. In the case of animals crossing a drift they must emerge blindly on to the further bank, trusting to luck that they do not bump into an enemy.

You realise the position ? Crossing a drift is an uncomfortable experience ; there may be rhinoceros, elephant, buffalo, or lion, at the other side of it.

For this reason we went cautiously, striving to penetrate the inky shadows under the trees on the further bank. I had set foot upon dry land and was about to break the oppressive silence with a remark to my companion when a big black beast emerged from the farther shadows and threw itself upon me. I had no chance to shoot, my hands were full of clothing ; I

dropped it and grappled with my assailant. It was Bingo ! He had been lying up under the river bank waiting for night to cool the earth so that his sore feet would not suffer further damage. We all rejoiced at this fortunate reunion, then we put on our socks and boots and headed for the Somali trail and camp.

Close to Gallon Ford we saw a zebra sentry keeping watch upon the bank while his companions drank. Walter shot him, the .450 bullet knocking him right off his feet. The rest of the herd broke cover and fled away into the thorns with a thunder of hoofs. We left the zebra lying beside the trail, a bait for lions. Had it been earlier in the day we should have covered the carcass with branches to keep off the vultures, but night was upon us and there was no fear of our kill being eaten by those for whom it was not intended.

The vultures patrol the skies at immense heights, from which they can distinguish the outlines of a dead beast on the ground below, but if the beast is camouflaged by bushes or grass they cannot discover it. Lions know this, and when they have meat left over they hide it under bush or tree to preserve it for the following night.

On the plains I have seen vultures completely demolish a dead zebra in thirty-five minutes. There are several varieties of these birds. Some are small, like hawks, some are as large as geese, but the largest are the marabout storks. They stand four feet high and have an enormous wing spread. The first onslaughts upon the carcass are made by tearing at the orifices in the hide. Very soon the smaller birds have torn out the intestines and are able to creep right inside the body, where they excavate amongst the ribs.

The marabouts stand on the carcass delivering

sledge-hammer blows with their heavy curved beaks until they cut out a hole. They then seize on the edge of this and proceed to tear off long strips of meat. They use wing and leg power for leverage as the strip gets longer ; they stand at their full height, flapping and staggering in their efforts to rip the meat free. There is much quarrelling among the birds, they pursue each other round the kill, screeching and hopping grotesquely.

A marabout cannot take the air easily, he has to hop along the ground for about ten yards, gaining speed, until he takes off like an airplane. When one surprises these birds at a feast it is possible to dash amongst them and knock them over before they can fly, but it is a very risky proceeding. A European boy trying this trick had his entrails torn out ; one peck of a marabout's beak will penetrate the soft skin of man.

No one kills vultures ; they are deemed valuable scavengers and it is held that carcasses and offal would lie about poisoning the countryside if the vultures were exterminated. With this view I do not altogether agree. Ants, jackals, and hyenas quickly make away with dead bodies ; genet cats, leopards, and kites help. The animals which die in the forests are not eaten by vultures, and among these are such big beasts as elephants and buffaloes. I should like to see the vultures exterminated, they are the most horrible creatures of the wilderness. They kill sick and wounded buck by the most ghastly methods ; hyenas are bad enough, but vultures are worse. I have never shot one, the law prohibits it ; but I have shot hundreds of hyenas, I am glad to say.

We slept soundly that night ; the following morning we were early astir to see what had happened to our bait. It was gone from the place where we had left it. The

trail was plain to follow, for the lion had picked up the kill by the throat and walked away with it, dragging its haunches along the ground. He had taken it past the ford, about half a mile, and had hidden it in a thicket.

We investigated, cautiously, being forced to crawl into the bush for ten yards to examine the carcass, but the lion was not lying up near by to guard his provender as they sometimes do, and we were not abashed by his presence.

We went back to camp for breakfast and afterwards returned with ten boys and a stout rope. This we attached to the hind legs of the zebra and the boys attempted to withdraw it from the tangle of bush and thorns in which it was embedded. They were unable to do so ! Walter and I tailed on to the rope and eventually we got the carcass out into the sunlight.

Mark the strength of that rope, for it is interesting in view of what followed. We towed the zebra to a little knoll and there we tethered it ; the rope, which was attached to its hind legs, I made fast to a tree stump ; I then wound an eland-hide reim round its neck about six times and round another stump. We then instructed the boys to cut thorns for a boma.

This method of lion hunting is as follows. You tie up your kill on the top of a slight rise and behind it you build a tiny enclosure constructed of boughs. Loopholes are made in this so that the sportsman can see the kill against the sky-line. When the lion comes for his dinner you shoot him. It is necessary to have the kill very close to the boma so that you can see it on a dark night. I have never known a lion to come to a kill like this in moonlight.

The interior of our boma measured five feet by six feet ; its walls were two feet thick; on its top were

laid tree-boughs to keep out the starlight. It was made by planting a few posts in the ground to serve as uprights and piling thorn branches against them to a height of about five feet. The result was like a thick hedge in which there was no hole large enough to admit a creature of the size of a terrier dog.

A tangle of interlacing thorn boughs is difficult to penetrate, a man could force his way through it but only with considerable damage to his skin. It is supposed that a lion could not enter very easily and would not succeed in doing so in face of rifle fire. During the reign of the Tsavo man-eaters bomas were constructed twenty feet in thickness, but the lions forced their way in and took their prey out with them. The white men who were trying to kill these man-eaters might have sat up in a boma and shot the lions as they scrambled through, but when one considers the numbers of coolies employed on the building of the railway and the several different bomas in which they sought shelter from the marauders the task of anticipating the direction of the lions' onslaughts must have been almost insuperable.

Mr. John Costello was one of these men and he was a good lion hunter and a brave man, but at that time he had not been long in the country and perhaps did not know as much about lions as he learnt afterwards. He knew enough to catch the big man-eater in a trap of his own construction however. This was a big wooden cage with a trap-door, baited with a live goat. The first night he set it he caught three Masai natives ! The Masai cannot resist goats or cattle. After he caught the lion he kept it as a pet until pressure was brought to bear upon him to induce him to kill it. One of the coolies it attacked had thrust a burning brand into its face ; it had a suppurating wound on its forehead, and

this Costello used to dress with ointment, applied by means of rags on the end of a long pole.

My wife remembers witnessing this performance when she was a few years old. She describes the terrible onslaughts made upon the imprisoning bars behind which was held the most renowned man-eater that ever lived. This lion and his partners killed hundreds of people, among whom was a white man named Ryall. General Burton, in his book on man-eaters, refers to this episode as having taken place in Uganda. It took place near Mkindu in Kenya, during the building of the Uganda Railway. Three men sat up at night in a railway carriage to shoot the lions. They neglected the simplest precautions against being taken unawares ; the man-eater caught one of them without difficulty. I cannot understand how they came to underrate the capabilities of such an enemy, who had lived for weeks on human flesh and against whom all the most cunning devices had been employed in vain.

Undismayed by the reputed strength and ferocity of our quarry, we constructed our little boma, leaving a hole in the back of it through which we could enter. The job was completed by four o'clock ; we crawled inside to make sure of a clear view of the kill. The zebra was exactly eight feet from our loopholes ; it was dangerous to have it further away for a dead lion is less to be feared than a wounded one, and in the dark a near target is a sure one.

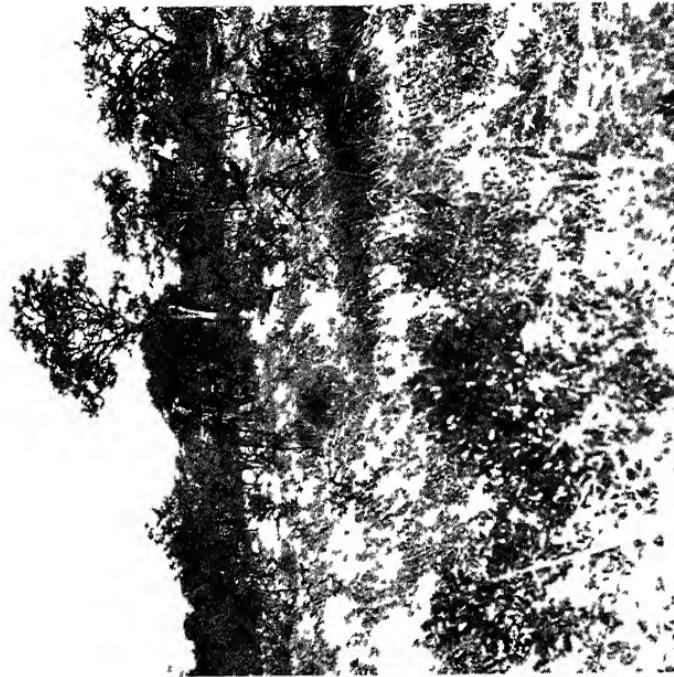
Everything seemed favourable for the night's adventure, except the weather. Clouds were banking up in the east and it looked as if the long rains would break that night. We returned to camp for tea hoping for the best. We awaited the hour for taking up our vigil in some excitement and trepidation. There is no more

enjoyable sensation than waiting for the approach of darkness to take up one's position in a lion boma. Rifles are cleaned and sights tested ; the time is portentous. One lies down to sleep in preparation for the hours of wakefulness to come, but, personally, I have never succeeded in sleeping during the day prior to one of these adventures. On the other hand, I always went to sleep in the boma, being able to do so noiselessly, and in the assurance that with the arrival of the lion I should awake. Walter snores and I always had to prod him into wakefulness the moment he dropped off. It may seem foolhardy to sleep within eight feet of a lion's supper, but we did it ; not once but many times.

"Boma shooting" was often employed by the old-timers. In those days we never thought of using a light. Later, people began to use electric torches ; they were enabled to place the kill twenty yards away from their eyes, which is a more comfortable way of doing things. It became so easy to dazzle a lion with a spot light and shoot him at long range that now it is prohibited by law. There is plenty of it done despite that.

It has been said that shooting lions against the sky-line in the old way was unsporting ; let anyone who holds this view try sitting in pitch darkness in a flimsy shelter while the monarch of the wilds walks round sniffing at him, and judge if he would not prefer to face the beast in daylight at a hundred yards' range.

Blaney Percival, who has shot many more lions than I have, says that to sit up for them in a boma is sheer lunacy. The truth of it is that both methods are dangerous, but whereas one method is like a duel wherein one opponent is armed with an axe and the other with a pistol, the other method is like a duel where there is



THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONCEALMENT AND FLIGHT

only one pistol and the antagonists cut the cards to decide who shall use it.

For some reason lions pay little attention to men hiding in a boma. Why this is I have never understood. Natives, when travelling in small parties, construct bomas in which to sleep. It is possible that lions inspect these refuges in the secrecy of the night and learn that their occupants are not to be feared.

It must be remembered that the ordinary hunting lion does not wish to kill man. In my opinion, he recognises man as a hunter, like himself, and would no more think of preying upon him than upon a leopard or a cheetah. By day the lion is afraid of man ; by night he has little fear of him. This fact should convince people that lions have greater wisdom than they are commonly credited with. I think that the lion approaches the boma, makes a thorough inspection of it and its occupants, and, having come to the conclusion that all is well, proceeds with his meal.

So far, safe—but now creeps in the uncertainty of the mentality of the particular lion you are dealing with. He may have been shot at from a boma before ; he may be in a horrible temper. In the first instance he is likely to run away ; in the second, he may try to kill you. If you should have the bad luck to happen upon a man-eater, you are “for it.” All these considerations contribute to the excitement and uncertainty of boma shooting, and are some of the reasons why we were a little strung up as we waited for the fateful hour.

At dusk we crossed the ford accompanied by the boys carrying our blankets and proceeded to the boma a quarter of a mile away. I took a long time to put on my boots after crossing the river ; Walter went on ahead with the boys. When I caught up with him he

told me that he had seen two lions slinking through the bushes beside the trail.

The sky was overcast, a fine drizzle was falling, but it was unlikely that the rains would break with a burst after the long drought. I opined that we should have a week or two of fine weather before the deluge started. We did; but the premonitory symptoms of wet weather upset our plans for that night.

We reached the boma as the shadows were growing black. In the west the setting sun, although it had vanished over the sky-line, still illumined the fleecy clouds in that portion of the heavens, painting them in glowing colours of pink and gold, but the dun cumulus masses from the east were creeping overhead, casting a gloom upon the river valley. I withdrew the protecting branches from the kill, Walter crawled into the boma and received from the natives blankets and coats, which he proceeded to arrange for our beds. He then posed himself, lying prone behind the loopholes, instructing me to remove such twigs and leaves as obscured his view of the kill. The loopholes were about six inches in diameter and the field of fire from within was strictly limited. I joined him in the boma, the boys blocked up the entrance with boughs, and hurried away to the security of the camp, leaving us alone to face the perils of the night.

There was not much elbow-room in the boma, it was impossible to stand erect; the thorns were within a foot of our heels and our shoulders. We settled ourselves as comfortably as possible, poked our rifles through the loopholes, arranged coats and blankets to form rests for our chests and arms while watching the kill, and disposed ourselves for a last smoke before the business of the night commenced.

At such times of stillness the beauty of the evening is realised. I always lie on my back looking up at the sky through the thorns, trusting to my ears to inform me of what is happening outside. The ripple of the river was wafted faintly to us. Down there among the big trees guinea-fowl were going to roost, informing the whole world of the fact as though there were no serval cats or leopards within a hundred miles. Spur fowl called among the bushes and from afar off came the disconsolate wail of a hyena.

The darkness deepened, the veld was thick with shadows ; thorn trees began to lose their distinctive outlines and become strange, frightening objects, which moved noiselessly about when one stared hard at them, but the eastern sky still glowed like the gateway of paradise, a clear pearly light, which made one think of the fairyland of one's youthful imaginings. Only the effluvium of the dead zebra poisoned the contentment of our minds. One haunch of the carcass had been eaten, the beast had been dead two days ; it was, to say the least of it, "ripe," and we lay within ten feet of it ! At first the smell of a kill makes people sick, but they get used to it—one may get used to anything. Once I lived in a Syrian lodging house in Toronto ; the food was full of cockroaches, but I ate it with a good appetite. Since that experience I have never been squeamish. These things are a matter of custom : Kavirondu natives eat meat more rotten than a two-days-dead lion kill ; English gentlemen eat hares in even worse condition.

I lay thinking about lions while finishing my pipe. I expected that our kill would be visited by one, or at the most two of the beasts, for only one haunch had been eaten the previous night. It grew quite dark ; we put our pipes away. A few stars shone in the eastern sky,

overhead it was black. I turned over to stare out of my loophole ; I was looking against a black curtain of cloud, nothing whatever was visible. We had lost our sky-line ; a disturbing fact, but not irremediable, for the sky might grow lighter as the night wore on. There was not a sound in the bush, it was peculiar that no hyenas chuckled and scolded round the kill. That silence meant lions ; they were hanging about somewhere, keeping the scavengers from their meat.

Suddenly we heard a grunt from the thicket fifty yards away, where the lion had hidden his kill ; it was followed by the crash of breaking branches and several more grunts—loud, angry grunts. I began to tremble from head to heels. Evidently I am cursed with a nervous temperament ; I never know what I shall do until the moment of action comes. I am like an animal ; one day I will fight, the next I want to run away. On this occasion I wanted to run away, but there was no getting out of that boma before the natives returned to liberate us. The grunting came straight towards us ; I envisaged a huge, angry lion, stalking through the darkness to punish the men who had robbed him of his supper. I gripped my rifle and slowly turned over the safety catch. The grunting ceased ; there ensued a period of intense silence ; then there sounded a long, distinct sniff at the back of the boma. The lion was smelling at our heels through twelve inches of thorns !

It requires great strength of will to keep still at such a moment, but complete stillness is necessary. If the lion had tried to break in, if there had been a sudden crash of breaking bush, we should have been round in an instant, with rifles blazing ; but we were quite safe as long as the lion stayed outside the boma—a cat may sniff at a king without doing him any harm.

In a few moments I heard the faintest sound two feet away from my right ear. I knew that the lion was standing there, listening. I lay motionless, straining my eyes to see the zebra, but I could distinguish nothing save indistinct black bulks, which might have been mounds, carcasses, lions, or hyenas. The rump of the zebra was exactly nine feet from my eyes ; that was how dark it was !

Suddenly there was a ripping noise ; the champ of rapidly moving jaws—a hyena feeding ! He took a quick snatch at the meat, masticated in haste, then paused to listen before taking another bite. He was in deadly fear of the lion, obviously.

But where was the lion and why did he allow this pilfering under his nose ? A moment before he had been standing beside me ; I had not heard him move. He must be very close for the hyena to be so nervous. There was a quick scampering of feet, the hyena had fled.

A long pause, and then—SCRUNCH ! His Majesty was dining. There was no mistaking him for a hyena, each tug of his enormous jaws seemed to rend the zebra in two pieces. He ate slowly, deliberately ; we heard him sigh with pleasure, licking his lips between mouthfuls. Within twelve feet, beyond the zebra, a lion was standing feeding ; we could see nothing whatever. In a few minutes we heard a squelching, tearing noise, followed by the lapping of an enormous tongue—he was drinking the blood in the belly cavity. He continued his meal for about five minutes, then he picked the zebra up, either to remove it or to get at the other haunch. The ropes prevented him accomplishing his purpose and he contented himself with matters as they were.

Walter brought his mouth to within an inch of my ear.

"He is throwing it about like a leg of mutton!" he whispered.

"Can you see him?"

"No," I whispered back. "Can you?"

"No."

These whispers were like the faint rustlings of leaves, they did not alarm the lion. Presently he picked the zebra up again; the rope parted with a report like a pistol shot! Oh, mighty beast that can break, without effort, a rope at which twelve men have strained unavailingly, how dare puny man presume to cage and tether you to be gaped at by silly crowds on public holidays!

He gave a deep "woof" of alarm; we heard his feet thud, full six paces from the kill, as it sounded. There was dead silence for some minutes, then, down by the river a huge, melancholy voice said: "Argh! Oo—argh—argh—argh—argh!"

We sat up and lighted our pipes, discussing the situation in low voices. I was of opinion that the lion would return; perhaps the sky would grow lighter and next time we should see him. We peered out at the night; surely it had grown clearer! Well, anyhow we were there till morning; let us put out our pipes and go to sleep, in a few hours there would be more excitement. It was cold and I was tired; I soon fell asleep. As for Walter, I never knew a better sleeper than he was—and still is.

About four in the morning I was awakened by something feeding on the kill. I touched Walter's hand and received an answering pressure. Inch by inch we turned over to the loopholes. A lion was feeding, but

we could not see him ; the sky in that direction was still as black as ink, although through the side of the boma I could distinguish the horizon. There was more than one of them this time. While the eating proceeded something was sniffing at our heels again. Again I heard a sound beside me ; against the sky-line I could distinguish the silhouette of a lioness's head—the short ears and lean, cruel jaw, which, seen in this way, appears to be slightly hooked at the point where the throat joins it. She was standing motionless, watching the kill ; I had a feeling that in a moment she would move forward round the boma into view of my loophole. I snuggled down to the rifle and waited. Deep silence fell ; the lion had stopped eating.

How long I waited I do not know, but suddenly I received the impression of a shadow, darker than the night, looming against my rifle sights. I pressed the trigger. The crash of the shot was deafening ; the jet of orange flame from the muzzle blinded me without illuminating anything. In the ensuing silence we could hear the noise of some beast groaning and struggling. The struggles ceased ; quiet descended upon the veld again.

“I have shot a lioness !” I said.

Almost before the words were out of my mouth, a lion roared behind the boma ; another answered from the bushes in front. A pair of them !

“No, I haven't,” I contradicted my previous statement ; “I have only wounded her.”

We listened to that awful duet, diminishing away through the bushes until it died out over the hill. I think we were both glad to hear them go ; it was so very dark.

We discussed the probability of my having killed a

lioness. Walter did not think I had ; I was certain I had hit something really hard. The feeling of uncertainty that follows the wounding of a dangerous beast took possession of me ; I envisaged a vindictive, agonised lioness, hiding in the bush, waiting for us to emerge from our shelter in the morning to charge us on sight. Well, it could not be helped ; we should have the nerve-racking job of hunting a wounded lioness in cover, and that was that ! Meanwhile it lacked but an hour to dawn ; we would go to sleep again. *

The arrival of our natives awakened us. I shouted to them to be careful in case there should be a wounded beast about ; they approached cautiously, withdrew the branches from the doorway, and liberated us. I was first out and went immediately round to the front of the boma. There, about ten yards from the kill, a distance he had travelled before death overtook him, lay the body of a big hyena ! The zebra was half-eaten ; the eland reim still secured it to a tree stump, but the rope was clean broken.

That morning we lay about camp, resting ; in the afternoon we wandered down-river and found the spot where a rhinoceros was in the habit of drowsing during the hot hours. There was a mass of dung under a shady bush, the earth was scooped into dusty holes, as though a number of barn-yard fowls had been indulging in sun-baths.

The rhinoceros is a nocturnal feeder ; during the day he likes to drowse beneath a shady bush. A big pile of dung accumulates, which the rhino invariably scatters with his feet before he leaves the spot. Why he does this no one knows. Natives tell me that he will go down to the river for his evening drink, afterwards returning to the bush to perform this curious duty

before beginning the night's feeding. I have elucidated some of the mysteries of the wilderness, but this strange habit of the rhinoceros remains an enigma I cannot solve ; it seems quite purposeless and unnecessary.

A short distance beyond the rhino's bedroom we came to a spot where the river entered a ravine among the rocks. There was a narrow gulf, about thirty feet wide and twenty feet from rock surface to water level. Into this defile the river entered by a series of cascades ; it ran slow and deep through the cavern for fifty yards, to emerge into the sunlight again over another series of rapids and falls.

Crocodiles do not like such places, they prefer mud or sand. I had seen only one saurian so far up the Guasso Nyiro, but where there is one there may be more, and we should have hesitated to swim in any of the deep muddy reaches. This, however, was a heaven-sent bathing-pool ; nothing could get at us through the rapids. We found that on the opposite bank the rocks rose up in turrets and caves, among which rock rabbits played and quarrelled. In a few minutes we were stripped and disporting ourselves in the cool blue waters.

During the day it is breathlessly hot in the valley of the Guasso Nyiro ; the water was refreshing without being cold. One could dive from niches in the rock-face at any height one desired ; one could drowse in the deep water, paddling lazily against the current ; one could swim mightily up into the face of the waterfall and punch and buffet the roaring cataract until, overwhelmed and defeated, one relaxed and allowed the current to carry one's listless body away through the deep shady pools out into the burning sunshine of the lower rapids.

I have bathed on the beaches of Muizenberg and Natal, I have plunged into the chilly waters of Canadian lakes and rivers, when the tall pines mirrored themselves in the still water and the scent of frying trout from the camp-fire on the bank lured the hungry voyageur ashore, but I remember no such bathing as I enjoyed in our rock-bath ; it was as near perfection as an outdoor man could wish for.

In the ensuing days everything became of secondary importance to our bathe. We would rise at dawn, hunt until midday, return to camp for a meal, and then spend the afternoon hours in the pool or lying on the rocks above it.

One day while we were in the water the old rhino got our scent from his retreat near-by ; he came up to the foot of the rocks and snorted a challenge to us to come down and fight, but we had no intention of obliging him. On one or two occasions we wanted to have a look at him while he was sleeping, but of course, when we were ready to interview him he was never to be found.

We decided against any more boma shooting on that trip ; it seemed preferable to take our chance of meeting simba in the open. In any case, what did we care if we shot a lion or not ? We were not tourists, the years stretched invitingly ahead of us ; there was time enough to shoot all the lions in Africa. Both of us are of energetic temperament. We wished to explore the country all round our camp, and since no one can hunt satisfactorily on horseback we walked.

The bush was terrible—all thorns and brambles. The blackened ground was monotonous, and the heat in the sheltered valley intense, but we soon found that up on the plateau to the east, rolling plains, exposed to the

cooling breeze, stretched verdant and inviting. The fire had not ravaged these plains and there was plenty of game on them.

It was about two miles from the river to the top of the ridge and all that was sweltering bush. At the top was a huge cone-shaped rock, and the first time we reached this we climbed up over it to see what lay beyond. Experienced hunters always top a sky-line expecting to see a black-maned lion or a bull elephant beyond it, that was why we climbed over the top of the rock instead of taking the easier way round it—surely nothing expects an enemy to contemplate inflicting damage from the top of a cliff !

The summit of the rock was not pointed, as we had thought, but hollowed like a crater. We crawled to the other side and looked down. There, fifty feet below us, was a herd of about sixty giraffe ; some of them were in a position where we could have jumped upon their backs. Beyond the giraffe lay grassy plains, on which fed oryx, granti, and ostriches. We surveyed the country with interest. Afar off was the end of the Loldaiga Range. There was no water for fifteen miles in that direction, and then only a water-hole fouled by animals.

We pushed boldly out on the plains, and within a mile I shot a granti for meat. The two boys we had with us carried this back to camp ; we went on. After several hours' trek we returned by the way we had come without having seen anything worth shooting at. In the bush beside the big rock I shot an eland. We left it lying and hurried back to camp to bring some boys for skinning and cutting up. By the time we reached camp we were very tired, and our thirst was so intense that for an hour we could do nothing but gulp down repeated brews of tea. I told Walter to rest while I

returned to the eland on my mule ; there seemed no object in both of us going.

Followed by the boys, I set out on "Two Spot." He was an Abyssinian mule, little bigger than a donkey, very strong and very obstinate. These animals will outtravel a horse and live on next to nothing. Two Spot's rapid walk quickly outdistanced the boys. I came suddenly into the glade where lay the carcass of the eland, to see a pair of lions standing beside it. Had I been on foot I should have got a shot at them, but before I could dismount they had seen me and vanished into the bush.

In this district we had found the lions silent at night, which means that they were cautious, yet here were two wandering about at midday, when all self-respecting lions should have been asleep ! It is no good working to rule where animals are concerned ; men are far more orthodox. It would be amazing to find a native strolling in the bush at midnight.

I left the boys to bring in the meat and headed Two Spot back to the river, my mind full of anticipation of food followed by a lazy afternoon at the bathing-pool. We did not return by the way we had come, the mule knew shorter ways to his objective than I did. How is it that these animals, when following their own devices, always select the shortest and easiest route ? It is the same sort of wisdom displayed by the carrier pigeon or homing cat ; it is certainly not the outcome of reason, and therefore it must be intuition—a higher wisdom than that begotten of man's logic. That attribute does not seem to have benefited man much ; I am disposed to believe that man's logic is an invention of the devil, since man is only completely happy when he is illogical, drunk, or in love.

Two Spot took his way down the hill without exercising

his reasoning faculties, but with certainty that he was taking the shortest path to water, shade, and rest. He threaded his way between thickets with uncanny precision and never once did he enter a cul-de-sac, but he did enter one little clearing in which stood a pair of rhinoceroses. We came face to face with the bull at twenty paces distance. Two Spot turned round and walked straight out again without a break in the rapid motion of his little feet. I was reminded of Charlie Chaplin entering a room in which a seven-foot enemy awaited him—and leaving it again, hurriedly. Two Spot put his ears back, showed his teeth, and said, “Ugh!” with the same sort of shudder as a man gives when he almost steps on a snake. I was taken by surprise; the rhino and I stared stupidly at each other. As I rounded the bush in full retreat I saw the pachyderms pushing off, slowly, down towards the river.

Arrived at camp, I informed Walter of my adventures. We decided that by cutting along the river we could intercept the rhinoceroses and observe them while they were drinking. After a rest and more tea we started off, keeping a hundred yards above the river bank. A faint breeze blew from the river. We were safe from discovery, I thought, but I had not reckoned upon the rhino dawdling in the bush. We almost ran into them, and they were above us, so that they got our scent immediately.

At the sound of the first terrific snort, which is much like the cough of a locomotive leaving a station, we ducked under a bush and crouched motionless, with ready rifles. The bull rhino was angry; it must have seemed to him that people were bumping into him in the bush on purpose to annoy him. He began to rush to and fro looking for us, knocking the bushes about

in a frightening manner. The cow took no part in this display of "frightfulness," she continued her rambling way to water. I had glimpses of the bull dashing about in the thickets, but despite his obvious desire to trample us he never got within fifteen paces of our hiding-place.

This was another example of a beast's inability to discover an enemy in close proximity to him. Neither the rhinoceros, the buffalo, nor the elephant, seems able to find a man if he is well hidden, yet all these beasts, particularly the buffalo, are credited with amazing powers of smell. The carnivora find their prey almost immediately, no matter how well it is hidden, which shows that the senses of the vegetable eaters are not as acute as those of the meat eaters.

It must be very difficult to locate a thing accurately by sense of smell unless a strong breeze carries the taint steadily from one direction. Drop a piece of meat into the grass behind a cat or dog; it will take him a long time to find it. He will sniff round and round it for minutes, sometimes, before he sees the delicacy within a yard of his nose. Supposing this meat is concealed in a hundred square yards of bush, and there is little or no wind, how long will it take him to find it? He will do so eventually; but a herbivore will not.

The Wakamba, who hunt elephants with poisoned arrows, creep up to the side of the animal, shoot an arrow into its ribs, dive under its belly, and throw themselves beneath a bush, where they lie still. The stricken elephant wheels in the direction from which the arrow came; he sees no enemy but he can smell one. Nevertheless it is very rarely that he finds the native hunter, crouched beneath his bush. A lion would catch him in an instant if there were the slightest breeze to carry the scent.

I have had a wounded buffalo looking for me ; he has come within five yards of my hiding-place without finding me. We are all prone to assert that the buffalo has the keenest senses in the wild, and we are all wrong. The hyena has the best nose, the cheetah the best sight, and the bongo the best hearing. As far as sight and hearing go, man is the equal of any of them, and, if sufficiently experienced, he can surprise any of them in their native haunts.

The zebra forms the favourite food of the lion ; the zebra's senses are remarkably well developed since he is always in danger. A Somali pony has most of the attributes of the wild zebra. I have never failed to see or hear anything which a pony could see or hear, but very frequently I have noticed dangers of which my pony remained in blissful ignorance.

My hunting dogs were often frightened by tree stumps in the dark. They would bristle and snarl, walk all round the unknown object, keeping well away from it until they got its wind, when they would immediately relax their suspicious attitudes and look ashamed of themselves. Now in no instance was I ever deceived by those tree stumps for more than a moment.

Many times I have walked up to animals such a jackals, hyenas, and antelope on the veld. My method is to walk forward, moving my feet six inches at a step, remaining motionless when the animal looks at me, continuing when he looks aside. I have approached to within twelve feet of small beasts and twenty yards of large ones by this slow and painstaking method, and I have been bolt upright in broad daylight, in the open, while doing it. The animals look straight at one without perceiving an enemy. Could this trick be played upon a man ?

Animals recognise that man is more cunning, more observant, more gifted with tactical sense than themselves, hence their great fear of him. The large carnivora know that man is helpless in the dark, hence their contempt of him when there is no moon to dispel it. That is one reason why lions will feed within a few yards of man on a dark night, but not in the moonlight.

Consider. The lion is a terrible creature, yet a hyena will approach within ten feet of him in daylight or darkness. No hyena will come as close as that to a man in daylight. He knows that man is more to be feared than lion ; but how does he know ? It would be absurd to suppose that every hyena had been shot at with rifle or bow. It follows that they warn each other, and that proves the existence of a comprehensive language amongst them . . . or a method of thought transference, unknown to us.

I often hear scientists deny the existence of speech among animals. These men know more about a dead animal than I do about a rifle ; they know the names of all its bones and the positions of all its nerves ; but they do not know that a cat teaches its kittens by other means than example. When they hear a cat talking to its kittens they imagine that it is merely making a noise, despite the fact that, to the observant ear, there are at least twenty different sounds and inflections in these utterances. This indicates a vocabulary of twenty words anyhow, and many others are there which we cannot distinguish. For instance, if you had a dog called "More" and a Frenchman pronounced the word "Mort" in its hearing he would take no notice. Now, you can teach your dog a language as long as you use only the names of concrete things and simple actions, such as "bones," "cats," or "fetch." For the rest,

you must rely upon thought impulses, because in his own language he uses thought impulse as a much quicker and more effective means of communication. He has canine words for simple things, and it is easy for him to learn your equivalents for these expressions, but if you wish to learn his opinion of the chances of getting a wounded lion out of cover you must develop your sense of intuition to the same pitch as his—a pretty hopeless undertaking, since I have never heard of a man able to do it well.

This intuitive language operates only between animals of the same species, of course. An alarmed buck can alarm his mate without sound or movement, but he cannot communicate his fear to a zebra without some visible or audible sign.

I seem to have wandered a long way from the rhinoceros and the thorn bush. It is time I returned to them. The angry rhinoceros did not discover us ; after a few minutes' fruitless search he followed his mate down to water and we returned to camp.

The dogs' feet were sufficiently recovered to trek by this time, so we decided to push on to the junction of the Narok and the Guasso Nyiro, about ten miles away. We broke camp and struck across country to the Narok, down which we journeyed to a point a mile above the junction, where we established our camp.

The river was very low after the long dry season. It flowed in a deep bed, the banks of which were covered with thick bush. Our camp was against this bush on the further bank ; before our tent was a clearing a hundred yards in width, flat and grassy. The riding animals had grazing, we had a field of view. We were content.

When the tent was erected and everything ship-shape,

we walked down stream to a drift, beyond which was a native village. They were Samburu Wanderobo ; they had a few goats and cattle, but they were on short-commons owing to the drought. Their thorn boma enclosed a dozen huts, built Masai fashion, of withies and hard-baked mud. In shape these were like gigantic ovens, with almost flat roofs, not more than five feet high. The elders of the tribe were all bald, all emaciated, and all stupid. Their womenfolk fled shrieking from the sight of us, a demonstration to which we were accustomed and which occasioned us no surprise.

The women of most native tribes have entire charge of domestic arrangements. They till the shamba, prepare the food, mind the children, and so on. They are very jealous of these prerogatives and will brook no interference from the men, whose duty it is to care for the cattle, build huts and protect the tribe. The women have many secret rites, often a secret language, to which the men are not admitted. When a man desires a woman for wife, he first pays court to her and gains her acquiescence ; then he approaches her father, and the details of the marriage settlement are arranged. The prospective bridegroom pays cattle which remain the property of the woman's father until he dies, or a divorce takes place, in which event the elders try the case and apportion damages.

All this is in accordance with the custom prevailing among the better class families of Europe, but there is this difference : among natives, the father is responsible for the good behaviour of his daughter, and should she be divorced he may have to return the cattle paid for her. Divorce is very common among East African tribes, elopements and "triangle dramas" are as prevalent as in Hollywood. A husband is allowed to beat

his wife, but he seldom does so, for the women are exceedingly clannish and can make things very unpleasant for an unpopular man.

Now that the "debased condition of servitude" of the native woman has been explained we shall find it difficult to understand her extraordinary stupidity. The average "shenzi" tribesman is by no means intelligent, but even he recognises that his womenfolk are little better than hens.

When we arrived at the manyatta the young women fled screaming and laughing in all directions, the old women scolded and abused us like harridans. We could do nothing with them. An old man appeared, took us to the shade of a big tree outside the manyatta, seated himself upon a three-legged stool and said "Soba!" smiling brightly. We replied to the greeting, and asked questions. The old fellow did not understand us, but he answered volubly in his own tongue. We tried signs, which seemed to amuse him; he laughed heartily and obviously wanted more.

I was reminded of an occasion when I was searching for a Government cattle-dipping station in the Wakamba country. I met an old Mkamba and asked him the way. He did not understand me, so I repeated the word "Sirkali," which every native knows to mean "Government," put my hands to my forehead to imitate horns, and lowed like an ox. The old man was delighted. He put down his bundle; copied my impersonation of the horned beast, but improved upon it considerably by leaping about, wagging his blanket like a tail, and pretending to eat grass. The two of us executed a sort of symbolical dance for a minute, and then I again asked my way to the dipping station. The Mkamba had no idea what I was talking about; he thought I

was having a harmless joke, impersonating a bull. He continued his antics for a few minutes and then, roaring with laughter, proceeded to imitate a goat. I left him "ba-ing" and butting in the trail and hurried on with my dignity severely shaken.

So much for the "sign" language with which travellers always communicate their wishes to untutored savages. I had no wish to play the clown for the Samburu as I had done for the Mkamba. I broke off the conversation and remained obstinately silent. Presently a young moran appeared accompanied by other young men and some children. He greeted us brightly in Kiswahili, which he spoke well. We exchanged news.

The tribe was in a bad way ; there was no grass for the cattle and therefore no milk ; the harvest of roots and grain had been practically nil. I asked the youth if there were lions and buffalo about. He said there were no lions, but there were buffalo in the dense thorn bush. I offered five shillings for a guide to hunt the buffalo ; the moran was not interested. The old man spoke up, saying that he could do with some meat.

"Bring us a pint of milk each morning and you shall have all the meat you can eat," I told him.

They looked uncertain about this ; the cows gave little milk and they wanted it for themselves.

"You want meat, we want milk," I said. "We will exchange."

They agreed reluctantly. In the next few days we supplied them with about a ton of meat, but we never saw a drop of their precious milk.

These people were not the true "outcasts" ; they were of the Samburu race, which is an offshoot of the Masai. The true Wanderobo are a despised, persecuted people, who live in the dense forests, where they hunt

game for sustenance. From time to time fugitives from other tribes have sought refuge with the forest dwellers, intermarried with them, and produced bastard clans who are of no particular tribe. Of such were these "Samburu Wanderobo," who, in appearance, were much like the Masai or Kamasia, and in their habits neither one thing nor the other.

Among East African tribes there are few skilful hunters, but the Wanderobo are certainly the authorities on game and its pursuit. Unfortunately they are shy and unreliable; but I hoped to find the Samburu proficient in the art of buffalo hunting and sufficiently intelligent to assist us. We made arrangements to go after buffalo the following day and returned to camp.

Our tent was pitched right up against the bushes; there was a small tree in the middle of the clearing where the pony and mule could be tethered; it all looked very comfortable. After tea we went down for a bathe. The river was so low that the scale fish with which it teemed were quite overcrowded. They were also ravenous, as we discovered when we stepped into the water and began to soap ourselves to remove the dirt of travel. As fast as the soap bubbles fell into the water, fish swallowed them; other fish nibbled up and down the skin of our legs, tickling abominably with their gristly lips. The water was so still and clear that one could see the fish without difficulty. There were no very big ones; the biggest was about the size of a herring, the smallest, of a sardine.

I have found all the warm rivers of East and South Africa to be plentifully stocked with these fish, which the South Africans call "scalias." They grow to a large size; I have caught ten-pounders in the Guasso Nyiro. Their starving condition in the Narok was

exploited by our Kavirondu cook, who with the aid of a bent pin baited with grasshoppers soon caught about a hundred of them, which he proceeded to split open and dry, ready for transporting back to Nanyuki.

The Kavirondu, who come from the vicinity of Lake Victoria, are the biggest meat and fish eaters I know. They will eat anything in those lines, in any state of decomposition. When one goes on safari with Kavirondu porters and the first meat is shot, they eat all night, sitting round the camp fires cutting strips from the carcass, half-roasting them in the flames and bolting them. Our cook was well pleased with his fare on that safari ; the other boys, prohibited by superstition from eating game animals, had little interest in their pursuit, but they appeared to enjoy change of scene and the unconstrained life.

We dined that night on guinea-fowl curry, and stewed dried fruits. Since we had no table or chairs, we sat on our blankets, eating from the tops of the chop boxes.

Darkness fell, the moon, an enormous golden ball, rose slowly, flooding the clearing with light. It was by this time almost at the full, and nothing can adequately describe the beauty of the tropic moon in the highlands, where the air is rarefied and clear, offering no obstruction to the mellow rays. The cook brought coffee : Kenya coffee, which is the finest in the world.

Suddenly a lion began to roar, up-stream in the direction of the native manyatta. His voice was drowned by a chorus of hyenas, laughing and howling. Few people have heard the laugh of the hyena ; the beast often chuckles, but his full-throated hilarity is reserved for rare and special occasions. In my experience, hyenas only laugh when there is food about and something prevents them from unmolested enjoyment of a

meal. I supposed that Simba was at supper up near the drift, surrounded by his satellites. They made a terrific uproar ; the lion appeared to be roaring with rage, his voice booming through the clamour like a ship's siren in a storm.

We listened in silence : the boys stopped talking round the cook-fire. It is unpleasant to listen to a lion in a rage, particularly when his outbursts of wrath are accompanied by a noise as of a hundred mad women shrieking with devilish amusement. I had a feeling that something evil was about to happen ; a curious foreboding in which the veld seems very big and lonely and man very small and insignificant. I have felt it on many occasions and it is a very depressing sensation, something like one experiences when looking out on a stormy sea in the darkness when Nature assumes her most terrifying aspect. There was a terror abroad in the night which might descend upon us at any moment.

I know too well how helpless man is if one of the big cats deliberately sets out to hunt him. A lion moves like a shadow in the dark ; he can attack at any moment and from any direction that suits him, and a creature which can surprise the wariest of creatures on their own ground is too clever for man in a situation where everything is against him.

The carnival came up the river towards us. We took our rifles and went out into the moonlight. Walter's rifle had suffered some injury to its striker, it would only fire about one cartridge in every three ; the knowledge of this did nothing to reassure us. We went up close to the bush and looked out at the other bank of the river. Presently we saw numerous hyenas slinking from bush to bush. The lion was there, as his terrific roars informed us, but he kept under cover ; we could

see nothing of him. The whole outfit came down into the river bed, and then silence fell—they had got wind of our camp.

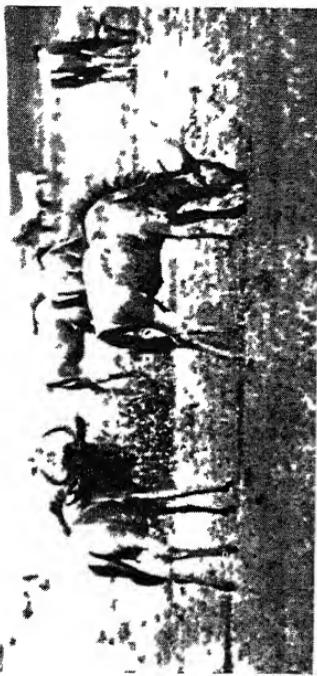
We walked over to the pony and mule. They were trembling, watching the bush of the river bank with staring eyes. Of a sudden a fearful roar came from behind one of these bushes ; the animals plunged and dragged at their ropes, but they were securely fastened and could not break loose. We got between them and the lion and I went down on one knee, levelling my rifle. Walter stood to one side and a little behind me. If the lion charged I should have to make sure of my shot, for Walter's rifle would almost certainly missfire. I had no confidence in my ability to stop a charging lion in moonlight with a light rifle, but there was nothing to do but try it.

We did not speak a word as we waited for the lion to come : the boys were huddled about their fire as silent as we were. Nothing happened, except that the lion continued to roar at intervals, making a desperate effort to stampede our riding animals into the bush, where he would have caught them easily. Periodically the hyenas would crowd up to him, laughing and jeering, and then he would charge them with a deafening outburst of snarling, while they scattered in every direction, shrieking with dismay.

All this took place behind a thin screen of bush about thirty yards from us, but, although we saw plenty of hyenas, the lion remained invisible. We saw the bushes bending, however, where he charged against them in his endeavours to catch his tormentors. The whole business puzzled me ; it looked as though the hyenas were baiting the lion, but I had never supposed them courageous enough to do such a thing. Obviously



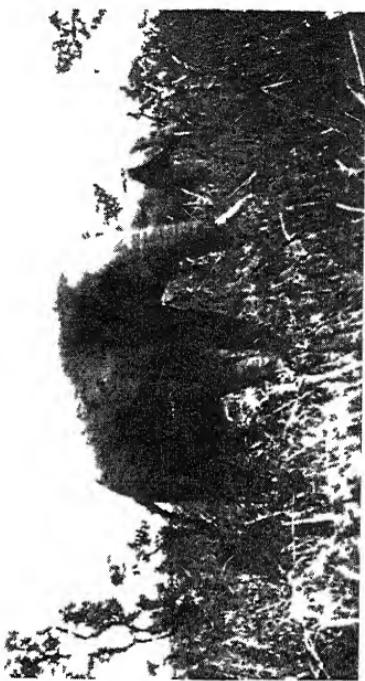
BLACK RHINOCEROS



WILD RHINOCEROS



UNCOVERING THE KILL



ELEPHANTS RESTING

the lion was after our pony ; the hyenas had no interest other than to assist him in procuring meat. Why, then, did they bait him and spoil his hunting ?

Animals are strictly businesslike in their methods ; they never waste time on objects of revenge or antipathy. A wild beast is concerned with the problems of securing a livelihood, procuring a mate, and enjoying life as much as possible. When he fights it is for some definite gain ; self-preservation is his first care, and he will only risk his skin when there is some tangible advantage to be derived from such risk. He has no fine feelings to be hurt ; he cares nothing for insult nor injustice ; his main object is to preserve his life, in the first instance by flight, which is the first expedient that occurs to him, in the second by fight, which is a less satisfactory method. Where food or a mate is concerned he will fight, but only if he thinks he can win. The opinion that some animals enjoy matching their speed and skill against the hunter is sheer nonsense ; the attitude of the animal is that of the professional boxer : he is in the fighting game, not for fun, but for profit.

Knowing all this, I was at a loss to account for the hyenas' antagonism to the lion. One is always coming against the unknown in the wilderness ; this was one instance where my eight years' experience of game told me nothing. Six years later I was to have a similar adventure, and that time I knew more about it, but on this occasion I felt like a man making his first acquaintance with the machinery of the law ; I was scared and bewildered.

For about ten minutes this horrible game of threats and bluff went on, and by the end of that time I had stopped hoping that the lion would not charge and was beginning to hope that he would. I had entered upon

one of my curious fits when I become exceedingly reckless, I could not stand the inaction any longer. I uttered a yell and dashed at the bushes which concealed the lion. He roared at me until I was half-way to him, then he cleared off into the river-bed, accompanied by all the hyenas. I chased them down through the bush until I reached the moonlit expanse of the river. There were rocks at that point, so that one could cross dry-shod ; the lion had done so and was up on the other bank somewhere.

During my pursuit of the animal I had been aware that Walter was shouting to me to come back ; he now appeared at my elbow, calling me all the fools in creation for chasing an angry lion into thick bush in the dark. I was still feeling warlike, but also pleased that the lion had removed himself beyond my reach.

We went back to the tent to drink more coffee and talk about the matter. We had plenty to talk about, naturally, and now that the danger was over we felt quite pleased that we had experienced such a strange adventure. Pipes were lighted and we settled down for a yarn, when suddenly we heard a noise at the back of the tent.

The dogs, helpless with their sore paws, had remained in the tent during the upset ; they now began to growl and sniff at the canvas. We thought the lion was just outside the tent, but it was probably a hyena scouting round for scraps. We went out into the moonlight again, and this time the dogs went with us. The lion had made his way right round the camp and was now behind another bush on the opposite side of the clearing, trying to stampede the pony from that direction. This was better than before ; there was more distance between us, and more light among the scattered thorns

than along the river bank. He adopted the same roaring tactics as before, but this time they did not seem so frightening because he had run away from us once and we felt that he would do so again.

We advanced steadily towards him, the dogs at our heels. When within about fifteen paces of the bush that sheltered him I snapped my fingers to Bingo and motioned him forward. Limping and staggering, as his tender feet encountered thorns and stones, the wolfhound closed in, answering the lion's roars with his growls. A few yards from the bush he crouched, and began to bay. Immediately several animals scuttled through the thorns, and one looked to me very much like a lion. I had no time to make certain ; I fired, and bowled over a hyena. There was a terrific uproar after the shot. Bingo, who believed me capable of protecting him from anything, rushed forward baying, the hyenas shrieked and ran for their lives, the lion roared and ran for his.

We pursued the mob of them, shouting and cheering, until we had run a hundred yards into the thorns and there was not a beast within hearing.

The lion did not return again that night, for which we were not sorry. Bingo was congratulated upon his fine performance, his feet were doctored and a special piece of meat bestowed upon him. He was an extraordinary hound ! When he was eighteen months old and as big as a small calf he received a thrashing from a Persian kitten. On that occasion he howled and ran away ; six months later, he stood up to a lion, and ever after that he faced everything without a qualm. Bingo died last year, full of years and renown. I think he was the finest dog I ever owned.

The next morning we went down to the Guasso

Nyiro and there we saw another hunter across the river. He was a Dutchman, and he told us that he was camped with a friend about half a mile away. We could not cross the river to him, it was broad and deep at that point, but we held a shouted conversation across the current. He told us that he had sat up over a kill the night before, that a lion had come to it just after dusk, and that he had wounded the beast, but lost him.

We walked back to camp in thoughtful mood. If the lion that visited us had been the one the Dutchman wounded many matters were clear which had been mysterious. Hyenas will eat anything, lion-meat included. Supposing simba to have been wounded, the hyenas would have followed him, waiting and hoping for him to succumb to his injuries. He had been hungry ; unable to catch game, he had turned in desperation to our camp for the wherewithal to assuage his appetite.

Only one point remained to be explained. Why, in his desperately angry mood, had he run away from us ? In my experience a wounded lion will always fight when he is pursued into cover ; he seems to think that his enemy is bent upon his destruction and he is not fast enough to escape from determined pursuit. Though speedy enough in the first hundred yards, a lion is soon blown, and slows down to a pace which, in comparison with that of most other beasts, is lackadaisical. Perhaps our lion was not the Dutchman's lion at all ! If they were one and the same animal we were exceedingly fortunate to escape a mauling.

The next morning we awoke at daybreak to see a procession of old, toothless, Samburu elders approaching our camp. The leader carried a glowing ember ; they collected a few pieces of dry wood, placed them

upon their fire-stick, blew the whole into a blaze, and solemnly squatted down about their little fire, each man drawing his skin blanket about his head. When a native is ill, he covers his head with a blanket and assumes the dejected attitude of a sick fowl. I hoped plague had not broken out at the manyatta.

In a few minutes came our Swahili-speaking friend, followed by several other moran. The elders were sick with hunger, he said : " What about that meat ? "

It was agreed that Walter should stay in camp while I went out to shoot a buck. The moran led me up towards the escarpment. We saw nothing as we ascended the hill ; the natives pastured their flocks and herds in the valley and the game had been driven away. After a hard climb we topped the ridge and immediately I saw a herd of oryx, fifty strong, standing within a hundred yards. Further away—at least eight hundred yards further away—was a lone cow oryx with one horn, standing under a bush, and beyond her some granti and ostriches. I took aim at a young bull in the herd, fired, and, perhaps because of my breathless condition, missed it. I stood staring in dismay at the galloping animals, when I suddenly saw the distant cow staggering about. Before we reached her she had collapsed, shot through the side of the head !

" I shot this one," I informed the astonished natives, " because she is old and useless and quite good enough for you people to eat. It would have been a pity to have killed a young animal for such a purpose."

Having presented them with their meat I returned to camp. To my surprise when I arrived there all but one of the Samburu were behind me. They spoke with the old men, who nodded their heads in a satisfied way.

"Don't you want your meat?" I asked of the interpreter.

"Oh, yes," he replied cheerfully. "We have left a man to guard it; now when your boys bring it in we will feast."

My reply was to order them to return to the buck and fetch it immediately, which they did with a very bad grace. When the meat arrived I presented it to the elders, telling them to convey it to their manyatta. They did not thank us, but next morning they were back again, huddled round their little fire, waiting for more meat to be shot for them. I told them that the next meat they received would be buffalo meat. Reluctantly they commanded a weedy specimen of a moran to guide us to buffalo. As Walter's rifle was not functioning properly it was agreed that I should do the shooting.

The native led us along the base of the escarpment about two miles from the river. Here we came upon thorn bush, so thick as to be almost impenetrable. It was not more than twelve feet high, stunted tangled stuff, with here and there a euphorbia cactus rising above it, but it was bound with every variety of prickly creeper common to this district and reinforced by wild sisal whose inch-long spikes drove into arms and knees like knife blades.

We were clad in shorts and bush shirts, which is bad equipment for such an undertaking, and yet I know of no better garb for safari. It is light, cool, and easily dried. When one has to walk through dew-wet buffalo grass, to ford rivers, and to trek through hot sand, all in the same day's outing, these are important considerations.

Stewart Edward White ridicules such a costume for African hunting, but Mr. White was a visitor to Africa,

not a resident. We wore shorts for the same reason as the western cowboy wore "chaps," because we found them the best things for our purpose.

It takes about a year to get one's knees hardened, which is why visitors do not like this rig. On this particular occasion we did not like it either. Buffalo trails plunged into the bush, we followed, finding it necessary to bend double to avoid the brambles arching overhead. Other brambles reached out from the sides of the path, wound themselves affectionately round our legs, and then tore loose, lingeringly and viciously. We were ripped to bits and exhausted by travelling in grotesque postures in the temperature of a drying-room.

The native went ahead of us, worming his way skilfully through the maze of brambles. He had no broad-brimmed hat to embarrass him and no rifle to carry, and he was only about half our size. He examined turned leaves and broken twigs. When we came upon fresh buffalo dung he bit it and tasted it and seemed quite pleased with our chances. After a couple of hours of this he stopped and pointed to the right of the path we were following. I understood that there was a herd of buffalo somewhere in the obscurity.

Our progress, cautious before, now became snake-like. We crawled and sweated through that awful stuff ; above us the brilliant blue sky held no cloud, but small dark specks, which were vultures, kept an eye on our progress. By the extreme wariness of our guide's movements I knew we were getting close to the herd ; he kept stopping to test the wind, which drifted from right to left across our path.

Suddenly, from the left, within thirty yards, sounded a loud snort. The guide stopped and looked back at

us, his face had gone that curious green colour which a black skin assumes when it turns "pale." I realised what had happened ; we had come between a solitary bull and the herd, and the bull had got our wind. Undoubtedly he would rejoin the herd at once, and we were in his way !

In our thorny tunnel hedged round by a wall of bush, which precluded flight but offered small impediment to the onslaught of the huge buffalo, we stood waiting for the enemy's next move. I put up my rifle, turned the safety catch, and prepared to shoot a small chunk of lead into the body of a beast half as big again as a short-horn bull, which might be expected to appear within a couple of yards of me at any moment. Meanwhile I made a vow never to enter that belt of thorn bush again.

I looked round for our guide, he had vanished ; there had been no sound to tell of his departure. The buffalo snorted again, then he came with a rush. It sounded like a fire-engine turned loose in the bush. The crashing of his reckless progress approached us : within ten paces an unseen beast dashed across the path by which we had come—another instance of the faultiness of the power of scent. The herd was in full retreat before he reached them ; we listened to the noise of the stampede growing fainter in the distance. I then became aware that, presumably, I had not breathed for some time.

We had a smoke ; we were very tired and thirsty. The native rejoined us. I do not know where he had hidden and he could not tell us. He grinned, and made signs to us to follow ; we took up the trail of the buffalo herd once more.

After another hour of torment we emerged into a little glade. The native hissed and pointed ; there was a herd of eland. I refused to shoot, I did not want eland

but buffalo. When the animals had caught sight of us and departed the Samburu proceeded rapidly and without caution. We understood that he was disgusted by our refusal to shoot a succulent eland and was now going home by the shortest route. We were in agreement with this decision.

Back in camp I explained, through the interpreter, that I would not shoot any meat other than buffalo. I also declared that I would not go into the maze after these beasts again. It was agreed that we should hunt in more open country on the morrow.

Buffalo emerge from bush or forest to graze at night. They may be surprised in the open at early morning or late evening. It is in this way that most buffalo are shot. My habit of pursuing them to their retreats in thick cover during the day is considered foolhardy, but I have employed this method in the big forests with success. However, that thorn bush was a little too difficult ; it was worse than trailing elephants through bamboos.

The next morning I went off with the moran and two half-grown youngsters, while Walter remained in camp. We proceeded along the river through open glades. By eleven o'clock we had surprised much game, but no buffalo. My guide went down to the river, where we all drank ; then he approached a fever tree in which was a beehive made of a hollow log tied up in the branches. He made a little fire, into which he put several green sticks. When these were well alight he bound them together with a strip of wild sisal, spat on them until they stopped flaming and began to give off dense pungent smoke, and then, torch in hand, ascended the tree. He thrust the torch into the hollow beehive, held it there for a few minutes, then put in his hand and

drew out a quantity of wild honey. This, he and his companions ate ; they did not offer any to me. After the feast we continued on our way until we came to another beehive, where the operation was repeated. After that I realised it was time to go home.

We stayed on the Narok for a few more days, during which we hunted nothing more exciting than buck wherewith to feed our voracious friends ; then we began to pine for the high, cool plains of Nanyuki.

We broke camp and set out for home. On this safari, which lasted a month, we shot two granti, two impalla, two oryx, one eland, one hyena and one zebra. We also shot numerous guinea-fowl and caught some fish. Most people would consider this a most unsuccessful trip, especially as we did not bring back a single trophy, but it remains in my memory as one of the most pleasant safari I have ever made.

CHAPTER III

SAFARI M'BILI

IN the early days of Kenya's history a Government official stationed at Naivasha climbed to the top of the Aberdare Range and, looking out to the north-east over ninety miles of forest and plain, saw a lofty, snow-capped mountain. When he talked of this he was held to have been the victim of a particularly bad attack of malaria, but very soon Krapf, the German missionary, had walked through the Kikuyu country, armed only with an umbrella, and had made a nearer acquaintance with Mount Kenia.

All this mystery seems rather peculiar, for the mountain can be seen from as far away as Nairobi on a clear day without difficulty. Indeed, Mr. H. K. Binks, the Nairobi photographer, has taken a photograph of it from there; a unique achievement, for this mountain refuses to be photographed, and though many have tried to obtain a photograph of it I think Mr. Binks is the only one who has succeeded. From the Military Hospital on the hill above Nairobi I once saw both mountains, Kilimanjaro and Kenia, at the same time—a magnificent spectacle.

For four years I lived within sight of Mount Kenia—my house was a quarter of a mile from the edge of the forest which clothes its western slopes—but during all that time I did not penetrate it to a greater height than 9000 feet. On that occasion Walter and I started off

alone, carrying blankets and a small quantity of food on our backs.

We trekked all day, choosing a route where the country was fairly open, traversing a long slope of veld between strips of dense forest. At evening our way was obstructed by tall cedar forest, into which we plunged. There were plenty of colobi and bush-buck about, but we saw no larger game although their tracks were frequent. We came upon the Liki River, which we knew twelve miles further down its course, where it emerged on to the plains. Here we decided to spend the night. The river foamed down from the glaciers, its bed was full of huge boulders, it was icy cold and clear as crystal. Of course we had to bathe in it, and mighty cold we found it !

After our bathe we set to work to skin some colobi we had shot. By the time we had finished this the evening shadows were making the forest gloomy and depressing. We were contemplating building a fire to cheer us up, when we heard enormous footfalls coming down the path to the river. Our armament was one .303 rifle ; we did not fancy encountering an elephant herd with that, so we retreated into the river-bed and took refuge behind a big boulder.

The elephants drank at the stream. They were very quiet and orderly, and in the shadows we could see nothing of them but dim bulks against the luminous sky. In half an hour they went away, leaving us in peace, and we immediately set about lighting a fire.

We chose a spot upon the high bank of the river beneath an enormous tree : the forest was very wet and everywhere underfoot was thick green moss. I had considerable difficulty with that fire. While Walter

collected big dead logs from the stream-bed I juggled with damp twigs and pieces of greasy paper in which bacon had been wrapped. By this time it was pitch dark, the sky was overcast with cloud ; we were in the midst of a dense forest, twelve miles from human habitation, black or white.

I confess I became nervously irritable when the fire would not burn. The huge trees towered in awe-inspiring majesty into the obscurity above ; the under-growth was full of faint sounds where little animals lurked watching us ; the river gurgled mysteriously, and, in some places, growled with lion-like growls. I felt an uneasy sensation of being stared at by fierce animals while my eyes, dazzled by the tiny flame I nursed so carefully, could see nothing about me but dark, forbidding bush. At last the fire showed signs of burning, a flame licked up strongly at the sticks which I held above it to allow plenty of air to circulate.

Walter came up from the river-bed burdened with two big branches.

"Ah," he said, thankfully ; "that looks better !"

At the sound of his voice there was a snort and a crash—some beast was rushing through the bushes near by. I dropped the sticks and grabbed the rifle. Out went the fire ! It took us about two seconds to realise that it was nothing more dangerous than a bush-buck, but mingled with our relief was annoyance, for we were in the dark once more.

I set to work again with patience and determination ; in ten minutes I had a small fire going ; in twenty minutes there was a blaze lighting up our camping site with a cheery glow. We cooked bacon and eggs, and tea, and sat down to make a hearty meal, the first since five o'clock that morning. The river now chortled

comfortingly, tobacco tasted splendid, the hyraces began to tune up in the big cedars.

The hyrax is a small creature, about the size of a cat. He is not to be confused with the rock-rabbit although somewhat like him in appearance. He lives in holes in big trees, above the seven-thousand-foot level, and is chiefly remarkable for his extraordinary lung power. When darkness has fallen the hyrax leaves his hole, sits upon a bough, and begins to sing. He utters three loud croaks, which sound like someone tearing canvas, then he whistles three or four times in minor, falling cadences. "Wark ! wark ! wark ! Phew—, phew—, phew—" says the first hyrax ; his next-door neighbour answers him, and another joins in, until for miles around the forest is noisy with this primitive news-broadcast. The volume of sound emitted by this small creature is almost unbelievable—it is deafening !

The hyrax is a splendid fellow, he is friendly, courageous, and makes a fine pet. On his back is a patch of white hair, normally concealed, but visible when he is angry or frightened. It is this animal which is remorselessly hunted in the Kilimanjaro forests for his pelt, a commercial article for the making of fur coats and karrosses. One can never understand why human beings continue to persecute a harmless and engaging animal, when every city has its society for the prevention of cruelty to animals.

Those people engaged in trading in skins seldom know anything about the animals who supply them or the methods in vogue for ensuring the supply. It is frequently said that a board of directors has no heart nor other essential organs, and certainly the hyrax, swinging from a noose in the African forest, or being skinned alive so that his fur shall not be depreciated in

value, can have little conception of the keen-witted business men who are enabled to run expensive cars and drink imported wines with their luncheons as a direct result of his sufferings.

Yesterday I read an article in a newspaper advocating increased trade with the African natives in traps. It was said that a small town in Staffordshire was entirely supported by this trade. The acquisition of wealth covers a multitude of crimes, but cruelty to animals is not the least of them. I wonder if gradual enlightenment by education will one day cause women to regard the wearing of skins as barbarous and disgusting ! At present most women who have friends or relatives in Kenya or Tanganyika badger them for skins with which to bedeck themselves. When a hyrax sings within earshot of a settler's house he will break off his conversation to observe : "I must get that fellow ; my wife's sister is very keen on having a muff of hyrax skins." As a result of this persecution the hyrax does not sing so merrily in the forests as he once did ; he is going the way of all the animals that affect man's financial status or stimulate his vanity.

I once went hunting hyrax with the Wanderobo. Accompanied by numerous dogs we went into the forest and searched for big cedar trees with holes in their trunks. When one was found, a youth climbed to the top of it, thrust a long stick into a hole, and rattled it about. Promptly there appeared a hyrax from out of another hole lower down the trunk ; he glared wildly round at the circle of shouting enemies, and then made a daring leap to the ground where, in an instant, the dogs had got him. He died fighting like a hero against a dozen animals, each six times his size. Here was fine sport, my masters ! The white man with me was as

excited as any yokel when he sees the hunted fox go down beneath the weight of a pack of hounds.

We found another tree and repeated the manœuvre. This tree was hollow all the way down, the hyrax descended to the ground inside the trunk ; he thrust his head out of a small hole and took a survey of the situation. He was a battle-scarred old veteran with a grey muzzle and a fierce eye. One of the mongrels put its head into the hole but withdrew it again in a hurry, having got more than it bargained for. Several tried it ; they all got more than they bargained for. My friend called for axes to chop out the hole so that the dogs could employ massed tactics. A couple of natives were soon at work ; the hyrax stayed quiet within.

I thought of Charles Gordon facing the mob from the steps of the Residency at Khartoum. There was no similarity between a hyrax and a heroic English gentleman except that they both faced odds, without fear and without whining. I began to perceive that the best definition of sportsmanship is championing the weaker cause. My dogs had taken no part in the attack, they awaited orders ; I called them about me and announced my intention of fighting on the side of the hyrax. There was some argument but no fight, for which I was sorry.

The hunt was abandoned, the old hyrax still held his ground, convinced, doubtless, that he had beaten the lot of us. I should have liked to have understood his language and to have returned to the forest that night to listen to his news budget ; it must have been a veritable song of triumph.

I knew a girl once who used to hunt hyrax with the natives in this way, on her father's farm. She was a nice girl and deeply religious. To see her returning from the



WICK AMONG THE ROCKS

chase, swinging her prey by its hind legs, was to be reminded of the pagan Diana, but I can think of no character in the New Testament to whom she bore any resemblance.

When I sat up in the Kenya forest with Walter Knight listening to the song of the hyrax I did not know that the little animal had so many disadvantages in life. I rather envied him his light-hearted existence under the moon of Africa.

When the hour grew late we rolled up in our blankets on the hard ground. It was thrilling to think that we were utterly alone on the mountain-side ; there were no native villages, no European farms, nearer than Nanyuki from which we had set out that morning. Had we been accompanied by a dozen noisy porters, had we slept in a tent with an armed askari keeping guard, half the charm of the adventure would have been lost. Every hour or so during the night one of us roused himself to make up the fire. Once I awoke and heard the snort of a rhino, fifty yards away. When the flames leapt higher than usual I could dimly make out the bulk of the beast standing in the game trail. Evidently he had come down to drink, and seeing our fire—the first he had ever seen probably—did not know what to make of it.

I aroused my companion and told him we were being watched by a rhino. He stayed awake long enough to express his opinion that the beast would not cause trouble, and was immediately asleep again. I doubt if he knew what either of us was talking about. He confessed afterwards that he had no idea that I could actually see the animal. It was Walter's snores, I believe, which upset the rhino ; he must have thought himself challenged. In a few minutes he went away,

and when next I awoke the pale light of morning was painting the scene in dreary and depressing colours.

We had another dip in the stream, emerging from the smoking water like chilled mutton, but feeling invigorated in mind and body. After breakfast we continued exploring the forest but found it too thick for us, and finally, at about midday, struck back towards the township.

For the next four years I made no serious attempt to ascend into the mountain forests. During that time I learnt much about the topography of the lower slopes, and I observed the climatic conditions at various times of the year.

In 1922 an entomologist, named Wilkinson, arrived at Nanyuki. He ascended Mount Kenia as far as the glaciers ; he told me something about the trip before he left again for Nairobi. This was evidently the highest ascent made from the west up to that time, but we received news of exploring being done from the south, Nyeri direction.

It had been found that the slopes on that side were comparatively gentle and the going easy. Mr. Carr, of Nairobi, actually made a motor track almost to the snows and built a hut where sightseers could spend the night in comfort and safety. He discovered a frozen pond upon which skating and curling could be indulged in. A number of visitors from England began to ascend thus far, women and elderly men reached the snow-line and took photographs of the scenery. I have never seen this route, but it would seem not to be very difficult.

Since those days a way has been found on the north side of the mountain, I believe, whereby most of the journey can be accomplished on horseback. But in the days when I lived at Nanyuki few of the settlers knew

anything about the forests of the mountain and few displayed any interest in this *terra incognita*.

In January 1924 I took a man out camping on the slopes of the mountain. We ascended as far as the tangled forest would let us and there established our camp. In the evening we found a spot from where the peak was visible ; I had never seen it look so beautiful. We looked over twenty-five miles of forest, rising in waves, to an enormous rock which I always called "the castle." Above this towered the snowy peak, 17,750 feet above sea level. In the last rays of the setting sun the snow was rose-coloured ; the huge dongas and ravines were steel-grey and gloomy ; the forest roof was the hue of the Atlantic on a dull day. I suddenly desired to penetrate those vast solitudes, to bathe my hands in Equatorial snows. In a rash moment I declared that I would climb Mount Kenia. I did not mean to scale the thousand-foot peak—I am no mountaineer, and it has only once been climbed, with the aid of Swiss guides, ropes, ice-axes, and all the paraphernalia of the Alpineer—such an undertaking was not for me. I just wanted to drift up to the glaciers and have a look round.

A week later I began my preparations. I took an old tent, a couple of chop boxes, and half a dozen natives to carry these things. They were boys who had been with me on many hunting trips and were used to feats of endurance with no reward other than praise and a joint of beef or mutton when they had accomplished their task.

I made three attempts, but did not succeed in getting more than a few miles into the forest. Then I sat down to think out a better plan ; it was becoming plain to me that I had tackled a big job. I remembered that Wilkinson had gone up from the Forest Station, which was nine

miles away on the slopes. I do not like to follow in another's footsteps, but I perceived that on this occasion I should have to take advantage of what assistance I could get.

I hung around for a few days watching the mountain. I had, of course, watched it for years, but now that I contemplated climbing it my regard was keener and more discerning. January and February are the driest months of the Kenya year. The veld and the lower forest was scorched and brown with drought, but storms ravaged the heights every few days. Generally, in the mornings the peak was clear; at midday it was likely to be obscured by dense masses of cloud which drifted down the slopes until everything above twelve thousand feet was in the grip of a blizzard or rain-storm. When this happened it was days, and sometimes weeks, before the clouds cleared away. I understood that to be caught in those clouds was to be defeated, perhaps lost! I should have to be careful what I was about.

I waited until the mountain weather seemed set fair, then I rode up to the Forest Station. When I arrived there in the evening after a nine-mile climb, Mr. Fairbairn, the Forest Officer, was away. This was bad luck, for I had depended upon him for advice and assistance. From his natives I elicited the information that Wilkinson had been that way and that it might be possible to use the path he had cut. One boy, a murderous-looking Kikuyu, was induced by promise of reward to act as guide as far as a river which he had visited in company with his master.

We camped that night close to the Forest Station. In the clear evening light I examined the mountain through my glasses, trying to pick out a practicable route. The foreground was a jumble of forest in which

I could distinguish little, but on the higher slopes I thought to make out a long ridge, running straight up to the snow line. The beginning of it might be ten miles away. It would be difficult to strike it in the big forest, but when I considered the welter of ravines and ridges that barred me from my goal in every other direction, I was convinced that in reaching this spur and travelling along it lay my only hope of accomplishing the climb.

I left my pony at the Forest Station, but my dog Mick accompanied me. He was a half-breed, born of a bull-terrier sire and an Airedale dam ; he had brains and pluck and was a very experienced traveller. We started soon after sunrise. In Kenya the sunrise is almost always cloudless ; the sun thrusts a brazen rim over the horizon and immediately that which was grey and chill becomes warm and glowing with colour. The fiery beams soon produce discomfort unless one is sheltered from their direct glare.

We had little shelter for the first few miles of our march ; our way led across meadows and through scrub bush, ugly and dusty. Despite the altitude we were troubled by flies. When the Big Chief made Kenya and found it to be so much better than other parts of the world he feared that men would refuse to live in less congenial countries. He therefore introduced insects, which restored the balance to some extent. Mosquitoes, flies, ants, fleas—all abound in East Africa to detract from the happiness of man and beast.

I reflected with pleasure that I should escape from these pests at a higher level. In an hour conditions changed ; we entered the forest proper. Here it was cool and dim, the trees arched far overhead : podo-

carpus, mohogo, teak, and here and there on the ridges big stands of cedar. Undergrowth like ivy, and like soft gorse, crawled and twined along the forest-floor, which was composed of the leaf mould of centuries. Wherever it could make headway against the bigger growth, monkey rope bound and connected everything.

The floor of the forest was not flat; it heaved into low ridges and subsided into shallow troughs, a gently swelling sea of vegetation. Occasionally there were deep dells beside the track. I had sudden glimpses of sun-flecked glades surrounded by lofty trunks, of hill-tops looming above me, half-concealed among the branches of the nearer trees. From a distance this had all looked flat!

The fecundity of plant life in the mountain forests is amazing. Each tree stands bearing an enormous burden of monkey rope, creepers, and parasitic plants, which threaten to overwhelm it by sheer weight. When, finally, the giant is pulled down the vegetation swarms over it, it is buried in the green carpet of bush and becomes indistinguishable from mound or hillock.

The trail we followed was used by the Forester in surveying the timber under his care. It was frequently obstructed by one of these fallen trees, over which we had to climb, and when they were end-on to us we walked along the length of their trunks before plunging down again into the shoulder-high undergrowth. Termites, or "white ants" as they are usually called, had lost no time in undermining the monsters, and my feet often broke through the bark into cavities eaten out by the insects. How long does it take termites to demolish a three-hundred-foot tree with a bole as thick as an elephant, and how many forests have grown up, fallen, and been made away with by this means? Such

thoughts lead one into a maze of metaphysical speculation which, according to Gibbon, is the height of folly, but which, however out of place in the midst of civilisation, is an instructive pastime in the wilderness.

We surprised troops of colobus monkeys, which went crashing and bounding away through the tree-tops. The colobus is a beautiful creature ; he wears a long white cloak, black velvet waistcoat, and bushy, snowy tail. He seems to delight in performing "stunts" in the cedar trees. A troop of colobi will rush along a branch in single file, throw themselves through thirty feet of space at a lower branch, bounce off it like rubber balls, and take another flight to their objective. Since each animal follows its predecessor, one may have great fun watching a hundred of them performing the evolution in turn, males, females, and half-grown youngsters.

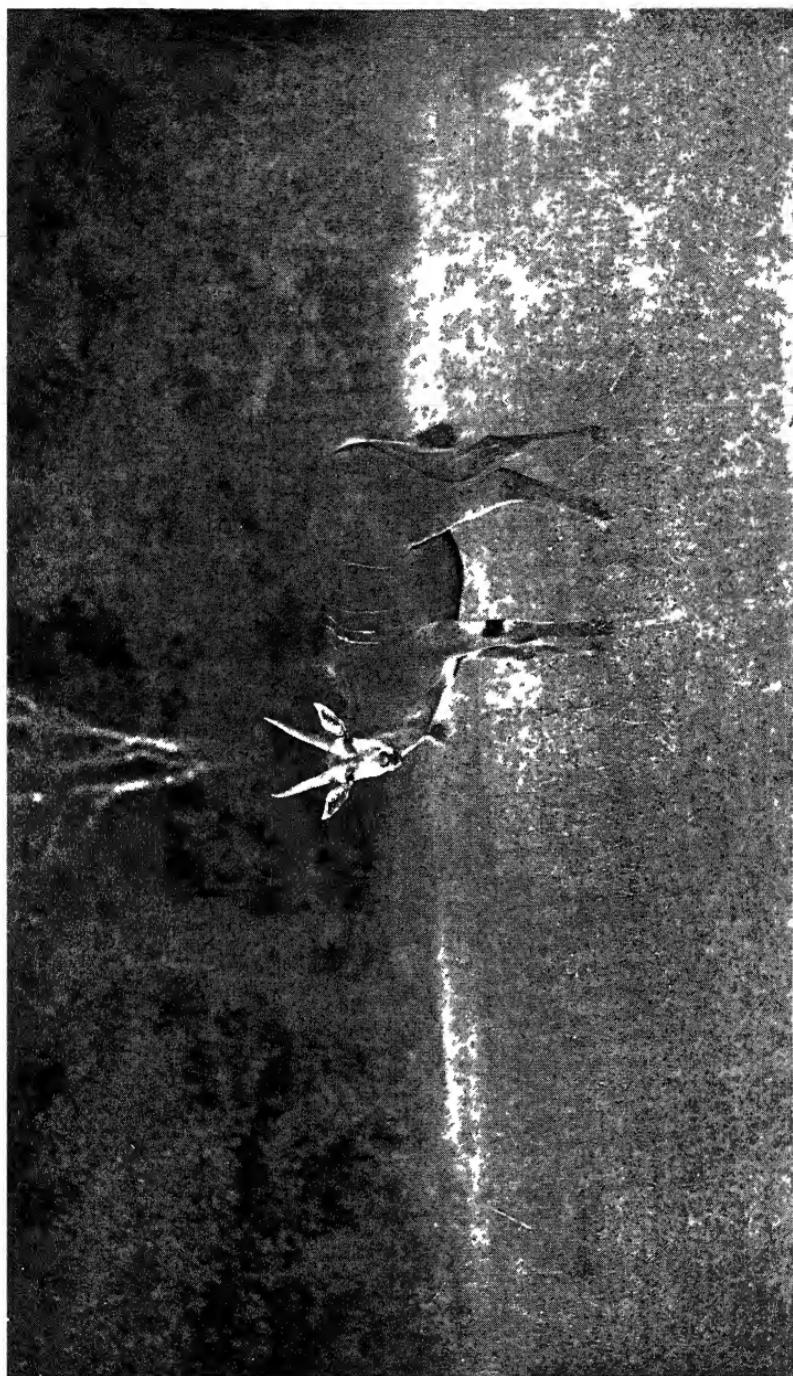
Only once have I seen one of these creatures miss its hold. I had taken a man up into the Aberdare forests to show him colobus. We ran into a heavy hail-storm, lasting an hour. When the sun came out again hail lay everywhere on the ground and on the branches of the trees, wherever it could find a lodgment. As we walked along a forest trail we surprised a troop of colobus, which went leaping across the path, high overhead. My companion was pleased and astonished at the sight ; we watched the leader take off from a high tree, fall twenty feet on to a branch, and continue his flight with enthusiasm. All the others followed his example until one hit the branch, rebounded, and fell a hundred feet into the bushes, striking the ground with an audible thud. So thick was the bush that we could not find the animal but I have no doubt that it was killed by the fall. I think it likely that it was half-frozen by the hail and unable to retain its grip for that reason. No one

has ever told me of a similar experience, so I am unable to say whether these monkeys come to grief frequently in this way.

In the Kenya forests there were plenty of colobi. Every half-mile we disturbed them, and they disturbed us, since the noise of their flight was not unlike the crashing of a big pachyderm on the war-path.

The forest grew ever higher and thicker as we proceeded, but the trail remained distinct for several miles, then it began to give trouble. Buffalo had been using it, and where they wandered off upon their own concerns it was easy to follow their trail and miss the little man-made path winding into the shrubbery. More than once we had to halt, deposit our loads, and scout round for the right track. At this work the guide was useless, I had to depend on my own boys, whom I had tested on numerous safari. There is always the likelihood that, upon such an adventure, natives will deliberately obstruct and deceive, in the hope that it will be abandoned should the difficulties appear insuperable. My boys had little chance of deceiving me, as they knew, for I could read tracks as well as any of them.

There was one slender, grave Kikuyu, named Gachari, who had been in my employ less than a month ; he began to show up as the best of the bunch. He had enthusiasm, the quality which conquers mountains. Gradually he usurped the place of Nyaga, my headman ; it was he who voiced the opinion of them all, and he to whom I addressed commands. I noticed that here was an example of character and ability rising superior to mere prestige. Nyaga, Mwita, Macheria, had all been with me for years ; they had accompanied me on many trips ; they understood my ways ; but Gachari's personality dwarfed theirs completely. Being Africans



A YOUNG ELAND

they recognised this immediately and bowed to his superior judgment and initiative, without question and without jealousy. Had I made Gachari headman on the spot there would have been no protests and no secret grumbling. Considering the calamities which history ascribes to jealousy among the leaders of civilised peoples, it is a pity that Europeans have not learned to display this magnanimity when worth is in conflict with privilege.

In the afternoon we got badly snarled up in a maze of game trails penetrating a dense thicket. I sat down to smoke while the boys scattered, each following a different trail in search of the lost one. Eventually Gachari discovered the mark of a panga on a tree. A panga is a heavy bush knife, eighteen inches long by five broad. With it the native cuts wood, digs holes, and assaults his enemies when his spears do not happen to be handy. A native, passing through forest, will take a hearty smack at any tree he passes ; those who come behind him will know that a man has been that way, a man who was not hunting but going somewhere. I blessed this habit as we took up the trail again, pushing through the thicket of bush, until we began to wind down the side of a ravine and heard a river rushing along beneath us.

When we got down into the bed of the river the guide announced that this was the camping site, marking the furthest limits of the Forester's periodical tours of inspection. We confirmed the news of a camp by the discovery of wood-ashes on a bench of grass beside the water. The river ran fiercely among boulders ; it seemed to be flowing the wrong way—towards the peak instead of away from it. I knew all the rivers debouching into the plains below, but I could not guess which this was ; at this height on the mountain it

seemed too big to be the Burgeret or the Narro Muro. Its opposite bank was practically a cliff, a steep, treacherous slope, studded with moss-grown boulders. A hundred feet above we could see the tops of cedars against the sky.

It was no more than four o'clock ; I decided to push on. The guide was not pleased at this ; he was unaccustomed to travelling with such energetic people, but he had to do as he was told, being far too frightened of the forest to desert. We crossed the river and scaled the other bank. It was a big job. The loads had to be drawn up from point to point with ropes. I found it difficult to get a foothold in boots, I removed them to facilitate climbing. Mick ascended and descended about four times, to show us how easy it was, but he was a better climber than we were and he had no loads to contend with.

It was dusk by the time we gained the top ; the altitude was beginning to affect us and we were all very tired. At the top the ground rose in a steep hill among cedar trees. Up to now we had travelled down as much as up, since we left the Forest Station, but here was a long, arduous climb at last ; it looked as though we were getting somewhere. A mile from the river we found a runnel of water seeping down through rocks and moss.

It was nearly dark, and time to make camp. We built a big fire ; I gave the boys my tent to spread over themselves and lay down on my blankets. Supper consisted of cold food and tea. The climb up out of the river-bed had made me hot, but with darkness and the cessation of movement I experienced the cold of the ten-thousand-foot level, and I was glad of the fire. Hyrax started to call in the cedars, frogs croaked by the water-course. Though we had been treading in the foot-

steps of men during the morning we had now lost the track of our predecessors and were upon new ground. So far as I knew no man had ever visited this spot. The natives have a superstitious fear of the mountain and do not ascend above the foothills.

I felt like one of the discoverers of history : Thorfin Karlsefne, Columbus, or Livingstone. The similarity between my puny endeavours and the accomplishments of those redoubtable heroes was small, but I was able to experience a quiver of the thrilling sensations which must have been theirs when they realised they had ventured beyond the limits of human enterprise. For it is thrilling to feel the freedom and irresponsibility of being first : beyond constraint or criticism of one's fellows.

Prolonged isolation in the wilderness begets in man an independence of spirit ; he feels himself solitary : a complete egoist. I think this explains the peculiar mentality of men like Daniel Boone and Selous ; they sought new territory for their comrades to settle but could not settle themselves. They hated to be members of a community but must always be free : answerable only to themselves : soaring like eagles in loneliness and liberty. Pondering these matters, I understood the fascination of the explorer's life : I knew why men risk their lives in arctic snows or equatorial jungles. And who shall say they are not repaid for the hardships of the lives they lead, or the pangs of the deaths they die !

Then it occurred to me that perhaps I was not the first in this place ; a curious native or wandering hunter might have looked upon the cedar trees before ever I saw them : there was no means of telling. But I consoled myself that, like the antiquary who buys a faked relic under the impression it is genuine, I had all the

pleasure that illusion can give, and so, happily, I fell asleep to the music of the hyrax and the frogs. In the morning, after a hasty meal, we continued our way up the long slope among the trees, down into a ravine, and from then onwards our progress was a series of ups and downs from one ravine into another. I felt like an ant walking across a potato patch. By ten o'clock we were into another big belt of forest on a large down.

Gachari climbed a tall tree to see where we were. He returned to the ground confessing that his tree was not tall enough to enable him to look over the hills which surrounded us. All the boys with the exception of Gachari were of opinion that we were hopelessly lost and had better retrace our steps homewards. I would not listen to this counsel of despair ; we pushed on again to the top of a ridge. Here Gachari climbed another tree. From his perch amongst the branches he announced that we were travelling in the wrong direction, down towards the Forest Station.

This was puzzling news. I wondered how long we had been wandering across the face of the mountain before we got turned upon the way we had come. There was no view of the horizon, all we could see was a patch of vivid blue sky above us. I began to climb the tree myself ; I trusted Gachari, but I thought he might be mistaken in his opinion. The tree inclined at an angle of fifty degrees ; it was covered with bamboo shoots growing out of the trunk. I forced my way through these and ascended to a big fork, forty feet from the ground. Beyond that point the trunk rose straight and unclimbable for anyone but a native or a monkey. I could see nothing from where I was. I contemplated risking my neck to join Gachari, when the decision was rendered unnecessary by Mick thrusting a cold

nose against my knee. He had made his way through the bamboo shoots behind me. When I remonstrated with him he began to wag his tail and half his body, furiously, which caused him to slip off the tree trunk and take a dive, head first, for the ground. I was just able to catch his tail and haul him up again, then I steered him down the tree, still holding his tail and saving him from many falls during the descent. After that I thought I had better take Gachari's word for it and follow the route he indicated.

We struck out boldly, retracing our steps towards the peak. I had become so confused that it seemed to me we were going straight back to Nanyuki, but in a mile or two the bamboos became more plentiful and suddenly we burst out into an open plain, half a mile in breadth. There was a small stream at the edge of it. I sat down and made a meal of bread and cheese, washed down by ice-cold water from the brook. I could not see the top of the mountain, but I could see that we were definitely going up and that seemed good enough for the moment.

After resting for half an hour we continued, and beyond the plain we came into thick bamboo forest. The canes were no thicker than a man's arm, but they grew so close together that they reminded me of a field of sugar-cane. It was impossible to walk through them, even by bending the body sideways and slipping between the stems. Luckily our pangas cleft them at a blow, and thus we made our way, taking it in turns to clear a path.

Some of the bamboos were old and black. An insect which preyed upon them had bored tiny holes in their outer casings and the rain had entered through these, so that when one sliced them apart the water

gushed out in a miniature torrent. Before long we were wet to the skin and but for the hard work would have been perished with cold.

A short distance into the bamboo thicket we came upon an old trail, whether of man or elephant it was impossible to say, but certainly it had been used by man at least once, for along its sides were the stumps of canes cut through by pangas as we were cutting them even then. By sheer chance we had struck Wilkinson's trail again !

Our progress became easier and more rapid. Wilkinson had travelled by compass, he had struck straight for his objective, without bothering about animal trails, and by the almost obliterated marks of his cutting we were able to follow his route. It was three years since he had passed that way, and in that time the canes had grown up so thickly that it was only with the utmost difficulty we could discover his tracks. Indeed, we often lost them and had to spend long hours in searching and back-trailing to pick them up again. We saw no game, a surprising circumstance which I could only ascribe to the dryness of the season.

Elephants frequented the bamboos at certain times of the year, for their tracks were plentiful, but I was glad they had departed, for nothing is more dangerous than an elephant in such cover. The big beast goes through the bamboos like a dog through a cornfield, where man can only move with difficulty.

It was somewhere in the bamboo forest of Mount Kenia that Carl Akeley, one of the finest hunters of all time, nearly met his death at the tusks of an elephant. The beast knocked him down, knelt beside him, and prodded at him with his long tusks. Those tusks passed on either side of his body, penetrated the soft

ground, and struck a rock, so that they could probe no further. The elephant's head pressed on Akeley's chest, breaking it, and most of the ribs, but he was not killed. I would not describe such a miraculous escape in a novel, for no one would accept it as probable, but many hunters owe their lives to just such extraordinary luck. Hunting elephants in bamboos is considered one of the most dangerous pastimes ; I recommend it to those sophisticated people who have lost the ability to get a " kick " out of life.

At one point we traversed a strip of country where rain had not fallen for many months. The bamboos were dry, hard, and discoloured ; the ground was strewn with their little spear-shaped leaves, crinkled and brittle. In Kenya such dry belts are common ; rain falls frequently all round, but one particular strip escapes the deluge ; but I had never expected to find such a place on the mountain. It was a silent, desolate spot ; there were no birds, no animals, and no insects to cheer us with their buzzing. The elephants never penetrated there, the brown canes stood in serried ranks with never a game-path to divide them. I was glad to get out of that part, it was uncanny. Beyond it the canes were green again, the ground soft and damp underfoot.

We emerged from the bamboo forest at about three o'clock and began to climb a steep rocky hill where a few stunted cedars clung to life. Here the dull sky suddenly discharged a torrent of stinging hail upon us. It was very cold and gloomy ; we took shelter under a rock for ten minutes until the worst of the storm had passed.

While we rested the boys talked together in low tones, and when I ordered the march to be resumed I under-

stood what the conclave had been about, for no one moved to pick up his load. Gachari explained to me that his comrades thought they had gone far enough ; they had never supposed we should get so far, and they had no intention of actually reaching the snows. It appeared that the Wakikuyu believed the crest of the mountain to be inhabited by the spirits of their ancestors ; there were tribal legends of men having heard the lowing of flocks and herds and seen the ghostly herdsmen on the lower slopes.

I had no patience with superstition and said so. We were going to the snows whether they liked it or not. My boys considered me more to be feared than the ghosts of their ancestors ; reluctantly they picked up their loads and walked out on to the path, but the guide was not so amenable. He stood on a rock above me arguing his point, which was that he was not one of my men and owed me no obedience and that he would not go a step further. The mutiny of this one man was likely to upset the whole enterprise ; I could not leave him behind, for he would almost certainly lose himself, and in any case a display of weakness would be immediately taken advantage of by all of them. The guide had to go, and I advanced upon him to see that he understood that fact. When I drew near to him, he swung up his panga to hit me. Unfortunately for him I had been attacked with pangas before and I knew exactly how to deal with the situation. The superiority of the point over the edge has been recognised since the rapier came into fashion as a fighting weapon, but this doctrine has not yet enlightened the barbarian ; to him, a blow is as good as a poke. The spear is a thrusting weapon, the club or sword is for striking, and the harder the better. Embued with these theories, my assailant raised the panga above



A GOOD SPECIMEN OF THE ELUSIVE LEOPARD

his head to deliver a mighty blow, and when he was at full stretch I poked him in the stomach with the barrel of my rifle. His collapse was instantaneous and complete. I administered a severe thrashing which had a salutary effect upon all concerned, and the march was resumed without further argument.

Before we had gone far from our place of shelter the hail ceased, and the sun came out. It was warm and cheering and our spirits rose. At the top of the slope we entered upon a plain of heather. It was the genuine purple heather, but it stood as high as my shoulders. It obscured the view ahead, but there was not very much of it, and we soon got above it and obtained a clear prospect of dazzlingly white peak and huge black rocks.

At last I had my goal in plain view ; I paused on the edge of the heather to survey the land. Before me the mountain rose steeply to the big rock I called the Castle. The ground was covered with tussocky grass which did not seem a very formidable obstacle to progress. The peak was about three miles away ; there was no obstruction between us and it, as far as I could see.

I felt relieved and confident ; it was easy ! When we advanced on to the grass I changed my opinion. The tussocks proved to be as high as tables and separated from each other by unseen valleys. The grass grew from one tussock to another so that the only way to discover the valleys was by falling into them.

When one put down a foot it was impossible to tell where it would strike the ground—two feet above the level of the spot it had left or four feet below it. In consequence of this disability we all fell down about every third stride. Luckily the slope was so steep that we fell up rather than down, but the sensation of stepping upon something that was not there was bad

for the nerves and exceedingly exhausting. To make matters worse the whole mountain appeared to be as saturated with water as a wet sponge. Whatever I trod upon or clutched exuded streams of ice-cold liquid. I was as wet as a bather from first to last of that climb over the tussocks.

We made for the Castle half a mile away ; it took us an hour to reach it. It was a huge mass of rock, in the sides of which were hollows with sufficient overhang to keep out the rain. This was a blessing, I had been wondering if on that sodden hill-side we should find a dry place to sleep.

While the boys sat resting I strolled out to a small rock, upon which I perched and began to survey my surroundings. I was now at the edge of the snow-line ; I could see the ground shrouded in white about a mile from me. Beside the Castle rock was a grove of little black trees. They had no leaves ; their bark was quite black. I discovered them to be petrified—dead for ages. How they had ever got there was a mystery, for no other trees grew at that height. I wondered if they had flourished when the mountain was volcanic, when conditions might have been warmer over the whole country. Two miles away over a grade that would have defeated any motor-car ever built gleamed the big peak, and beside it a smaller one with the appearance of which I was familiar. They seemed to rise straight from the ground ; it appeared that I might walk up to them and cut my initials on the ice that coated their steep sides. Looking downwards I saw the whole sunlit world of Likipia spread like a map below me.

The ninety-mile stretch of plains between Mount Kenia and the Aberdare Range seemed very narrow—no more than a day's journey. I could trace the courses

of the rivers by the strips of bush which clothed their banks. The Aberdares themselves were like small hills, but I know their big peaks to be eleven thousand feet high. The distant horizon curled up like the rim of a saucer ; whether it was hill or plain it all came to the same level in the finish—the rim of a huge bowl of which I was the centre.

Looking to the south I could see Ol Donyo Sabuk, a mountain close to Nairobi, and it was in the foreground ! Nairobi itself was hidden by its hills, but I could see so far beyond it that I strained my eyes for a glimpse of the sea, three hundred miles away. I believed I could distinguish blue water in the blue haze of the horizon ; it was all so indistinct that perhaps I deluded myself.

I had heard about the giant lobelias and groundsell to be found on Mount Kenia. I looked round eagerly for these things. I am no botanist. The groundsell was easy to find ; it stood head-high, which caused me no astonishment, for I did not remember what height it stood in England, where I had last seen it. The lobelias puzzled me ; I had no notion what a lobelia looked like. Scattered about on the hill-side were a number of cabbage-like plants. They were forty feet high and appeared to be made up of tiers of cabbages, each growing out of the other. I discovered them to be soft and waterlogged, so that when I touched one it squirted me all over. I had never seen anything like them before, and I concluded that they were the lobelias I had been told about. There was nothing beautiful or interesting about them ; they were nasty-looking plants and useless for firewood.

I left them and went over to the little black trees. I had no difficulty in breaking one down ; it was as dry as tinder and brittle. In response to my call the boys

came to collect firewood. We soon had a roaring blaze, and as the evening drew on we discovered we should need it. In climbing the hill we had sweated freely, now that we were at rest and the sun was declining it became apparent that the air was cold.

I was drenched ; I was also very dirty. I could not resist the opportunity of bathing at fifteen thousand feet above sea-level. There were plenty of streams to choose from ; I found a small rushing river, sunk deep between earthy banks. There I stripped and wallowed. It was little warmer than ice ; it refreshed me considerably. As I stood drying myself on the bank I looked round upon the darkening landscape with a pleasure that gradually began to be influenced by uneasiness. It was all very strange ; I felt I had no right to be there. The atmosphere was peculiar, different from anything I had experienced. It was thin and chill ; I could hear noises for long distances. The sound of my own voice as I essayed a song to cheer me up a bit went echoing away over the tussocks and recoiled from the rocks in waves of sound which came back to me a long time afterwards. I stopped singing and moved with circumspection as though I were in a holy place. The thin trickle of water, far away, was distinctly audible ; on a rock several hundreds yards distant an eagle sat and screamed—it seemed that he was within a few feet of me. Down below the waves of dark green forest grew dim and gloomy, the peak still glowed in dazzling spendour, for the sun was throwing it a last message from the heights of the Aberdares.

I dressed in dry clothing and returned to the fire. Nyaga had made some tea, for which I blessed him. The other boys were cutting a supply of fuel for the night. If we had not found those dead trees there we should

have been in evil plight. It did not occur to me at the time that in spending the night at that altitude without proper equipment I was taking a big risk for myself and my boys. I have always thought myself unlucky, but I am now beginning to think that the fact that I am still alive after so many foolhardy enterprises is sufficient proof that I am not unusually unfortunate.

One thought began to trouble me as I sat smoking, waiting for Nyaga to prepare my supper. Supposing an accident happened to one of us, what could be done? If I broke a leg the boys would desert me; I had no illusions about that. If a native broke his leg his comrades would be more than likely to leave him in the lurch unless I could prevail upon them to stand by him. I had visions of a mutiny on the slopes of Mount Kenia and of myself shooting a man "to encourage the others," and the thought was not pleasing. I had no wish to be tried for murder, but I would rather that than be left to care for a hurt man in such a place. I perceived that the eeriness of the mountain-top was getting on my nerves; it was time to have food and turn to the contemplation of other things.

The night was clear; I might expect a fine morning, and there was little possibility of bad weather before midday. I must make a dash for the peak next morning, returning to camp before noon in case the weather changed. This did not seem difficult. I had no doubt that I could cover a couple of miles of tussocks in an hour or two when I was fresh and unburdened. After supper I lay smoking beside the fire listening to the boys' low-voiced conversation from their shelter and the tinkle of falling water with which I was surrounded. Before long the rest and warmth, after the toil of the day, produced a drowsiness I could not withstand. I dressed

myself in woollen underclothing, spread my blankets and turned in.

It must have been midnight when I awoke. The fire had died down, I was beset with the cold of space. Against the sky-line the two peaks loomed dark and ominous, and as I lay shivering, too cold to get up and replenish the fire, the huge globe of the moon rose slowly behind the smaller one. In Kenya the full moon rises as large as a balloon and as red as blood. The optical illusion is caused, I should think, by the shimmering air, for even after sunset the earth still reflects the heat of the day. Beautiful and awe-inspiring as this spectacle is, it is commonplace beside the sight of the full moon rising behind the peak of Mount Kenia, when one is within a couple of miles of it. I seemed to be no more than that distance from the moon itself ; it was crimson and enormous, beautiful, but sinister. With its rising, a cold wind blew upon me directly from the peak. It penetrated my blankets and clothing, and though I had been cold I was now a great deal colder. I struggled out and heaped boughs on the fire, then I huddled my blankets about me and sat there shivering, waiting for the flames to scorch some heat into my body. Mick was as badly shaken as I was. The poor old dog lay in a tightly wrapped ball as close to the fire as he could ; he seemed afraid to uncurl himself for a moment in case the cold should steal in upon his unprotected stomach.

At Nanyuki during the dry weather there is frost on the grass in the mornings. My dogs never slept inside, so that Mick was accustomed to a chilly bed, but he had never before experienced anything like the wind that blew from the snowy peak of Kenia, and it was plain that he never wished to again. I shared his objections. It was only when I had a fire big enough to roast an ox that

I was able to drag my thoughts away from contemplation of my suffering, and realise that the eternal snows, illumined by the light of a moon six times ordinary size, was a sight worth a king's ransom. I sat there amazed, staring at the lonely, glittering spectacle until fatigue overcame wonderment, and I curled myself up to sleep again, still bemused by a vision of ethereal beauty transcending anything I have ever seen.

At daybreak I awoke, roused the boys, who had slept soundly enough under the tent, and had a quick wash in the stream. While I ate breakfast, seated beside my open chop-box, a small black and white bird found me out and hurried to share my food with me. He could not have seen a man before, he showed no fear of me. He hopped into the chop-box, picked up all the crumbs he could find, and then settled down on the edge of my plate to peck at the bacon fat. The friendliness of this bird showed me that such creatures know well whom they can trust. The bird had no difficulty in sizing me up as a harmless animal ; there was nothing of the snake or the cat about me, evidently, and the treacherous reputation of my kind had not reached him. He treated me like a buck or a rock-rabbit ; something that did not hurt birds. I told him that my kind killed his for amusement, to show their skill with weapons, but he payed no attention. He must have thought that a creature of such obvious superiority would be above folly of that description.

As soon as the bird and myself had finished breakfast I called the boys and announced my intention of reaching the peak. There were no volunteers to accompany me. I did not wish for company on that two-mile journey, but I thought it a pity that these natives should come so far upon the journey without completing it and over-

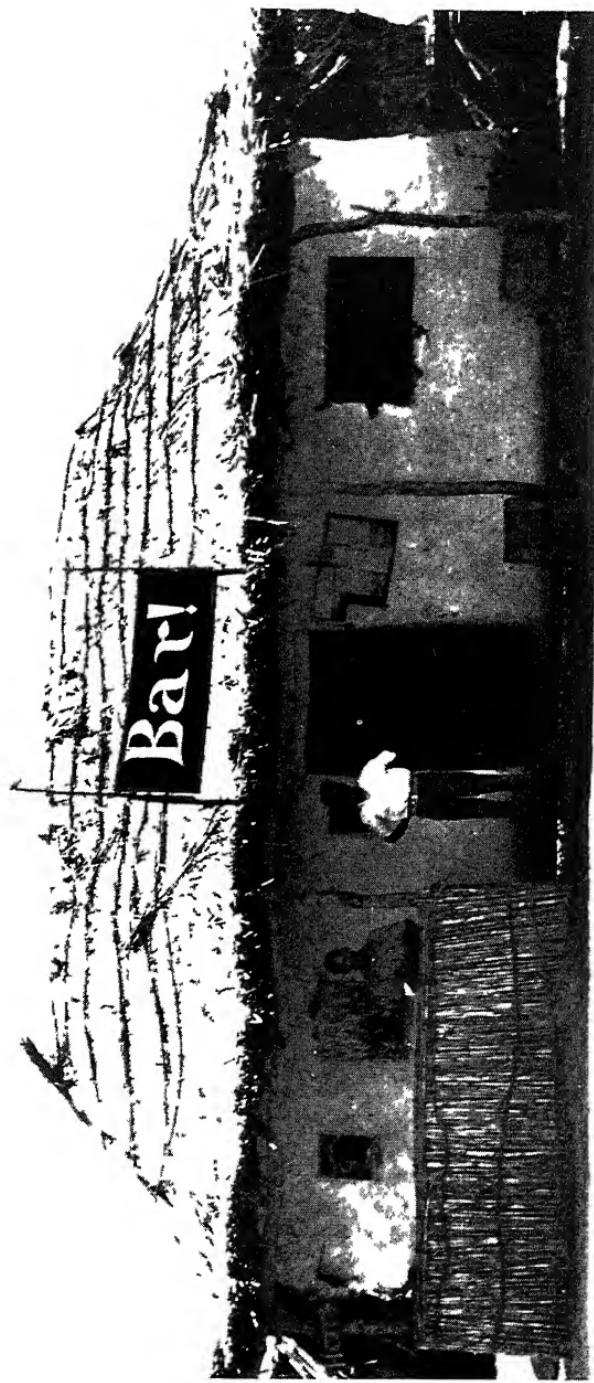
coming the legendary terrors of the heights. I pointed this out to Gachari.

"When you are an old man sitting before your hut down in the reserve yonder," I said, "you will be able to point to the snows of the mountain and tell your grandchildren that once you penetrated to that unknown country and stood at the foot of that peak looking down upon the whole world. When you tell that tale you will be a great man, Gachari."

The appeal to his vanity was successful, he agreed to come with me and face the unknown terrors of the snows. None other showed equal temerity except Mick, who took his place in the expedition as a matter of course.

The three of us started out over the tussocks. The first half-mile was not very steep, but we found it difficult enough to negotiate. The altitude was such that the slightest exertion caused breathlessness. The blood drummed in my ears, my lungs laboured, as I climbed over the sodden mounds of grass. Twenty yards of such going produced the same effect as a hundred yards of running at sea-level. In consequence of this distress I was forced to pause frequently for rest and recuperation. The wet grass soaked me to the skin again almost immediately, but the sun was surprisingly hot and the effort of climbing made my blood circulate freely, so that I was perspiring before I had gone far. We crossed a tiny stream which was frozen solid. It was amusing to watch Mick licking the ice and looking round at me with surprise written large upon his expressive countenance. He soon lost interest in the phenomenon, and even when we reached the snow he paid it no attention. Gachari's attitude was much like Mick's. I had expected expressions of amazement from the native when he touched snow and discovered that the

EIGHTY MILES FROM ANYWHERE!



"white dust" melted in his hands, but despite a long experience of barbarians I was yet unable truthfully to predict their reaction to new circumstances. Gachari, having listened to my explanation of ice and snow, dismissed the matter from his mind and never afterwards took the slightest notice of these substances.

"This is like Ulaya—England," I said joyfully.

"Huh?" replied Gachari. "It is very cold; I think Ulaya must be a very cold place."

At the crest of a hill, a mile from camp, we halted for a long rest. It had taken two hours to get this far; I felt as if I had been trekking all day, and I was bruised and shaken by numerous tumbles I had taken between the tussocks. The ridge terminated in a long pile of huge, oblong rocks, like dominoes carelessly tipped out of a box. Some ancient cataclysm had broken up the strata and strewn these enormous fragments across the face of the mountain. Climbing among them was not easy, as I found when I attempted it. A slip meant a broken bone or a wrenched ankle, and I was terribly afraid of such an accident. Gachari's carelessness unnerved me; he slipped and scrambled about on the treacherous stones, but, miraculously, he received no hurt.

Beyond the rock-pile was a small round crater, like a big shell-hole. It was carpeted with grey mud, which, although plentifully besprinkled with snow, was becoming sticky in the brilliant rays of the sun. As I slid and scrambled down the side of the crater and the mud clung to my boots in big lumps I wondered how many times it had been frozen and thawed. Every night it must become solid, and every morning, when the tropical sun beat upon it, it must turn soft and sticky again. The thought that this change was effected, day by day, throughout thousands of years was disturbing.

One grows accustomed to the gradual change of seasons, but when they are speeded up to diurnal transformation, man's understanding of natural phenomena seems even weaker than usual. Here was Nature giving evidence of the same automatic precision as the Machine, which man has invented for his own destruction. Although Nature may really work with the mathematical accuracy of a petrol-engine one is accustomed to consider her more human and erratic—there is a sympathy in eccentricity which eccentric man is conscious of. I did not like to think of that mud changing its consistency with such unfailing regularity ; the dread of the Machine hovered in the background of my mind ; an appalling truth which must not be admitted.

At the bottom of the crater I half-expected to be sucked into the bowels of the earth to be consumed in its inmost fires ; I could not forget that out of this hole had come the enormous boulders that strewed the veld to the banks of the Guasso Nyiro a hundred miles away, but no gulf yawned for me ; I passed over firm, though sticky, mud and climbed the opposite bank to a long, wide plateau. The surface of this was lava streaked with snow. At one point a huge black rock reared its smooth crest ; across its face ran a gaping crack, a foot wide, from base to summit. I stood by this rock, looking at the peak. Between it and me was a chasm several hundred feet deep, with precipitous sides. It ran left and right across that side of the mountain, and I saw at a glance that it was impassable. Snow lodged in every crevice in its rocky sides ; far below a stream thundered over many cataracts.

From the opposite edge of the chasm rose the peak, a thousand feet of smooth rock, seamed with glaciers. The biggest of these depended into the gulf like a gigantic

icicle, and from beneath it water rushed down to feed the river. My gaze followed this glacier upwards in its winding course to the top of the peak. It was by that route a man must climb to the summit, and as I considered the steep, steel-blue slope, it seemed to me insuperable. To my left, across the rift, a mass of rock towered up ; I recognised it as an object I had frequently seen from the plains below. I had always thought it part of the main peak, but it was divided from it by a long ridge and a glacier.

The three of us stood staring at this wonderful spectacle, and it was suddenly apparent to me that a white man, a Kikuyu, and a dog, were standing where no such creatures had stood before. Wilkinson had said that he stood on the glacier ; it could not have been here, for I was divided from the glaciers by a gulf that no man could bridge. I looked along the plateau on which I stood ; it was flat and empty of any sign of man's occupation. The huge rock against which I leant was the only landmark ; had there been a cairn of stones or any such monument as a man would leave to mark his achievement it would have been visible. I remembered the tussocks and the rocks which had taxed my endurance to the utmost (and in those days my endurance was beyond the common) ; no reference had been made to the toil and hardship of that part of the journey. I was convinced that Wilkinson must have reached the snows by another route, or he would have left some mark upon the plateau.

There should be a sign of my visit left there, something that would be indestructible. In my pocket was a piece of newspaper, the *East African Standard*. I wrote upon it the names of myself, the native, and the dog, together with the date : February 28th, 1924 ; then I

searched for something in which to enclose it. Gachari came to my help ; he produced a Nugget boot-polish tin in which he carried snuff. In this I enclosed my record and placed it in the crevice of the big rock, at about the height of my head. There it remains, sheltered from wind and rain, a fragment of civilisation, carried to a height of seventeen thousand feet on the Equator.

After I had done this I stood feasting my eyes upon a scene which, perhaps, I shall never see again. The sun still shone warmly upon us, but suddenly I noticed a thin spiral of white vapour wreathed about the smaller peak. As I watched, another gauzy veil came floating up the ravine and draped itself round the snowy pinnacle.

It was within an hour of noon ; time to be moving, if I were to regain my camp before the clouds gathered on the mountain. I did not wish to cross the crater again amongst the sticky mud. I made my way round its edge. At once I was entangled in a maze of precipices. Every few yards I came to the edges of dreadful abysses. Slowly and cautiously I worked my way in the direction of the vein of tumbled strata which I could see upon a ridge five hundred yards away. Behind me the peak became entirely obscured by white mist ; the sky was a cold grey ; the sun had vanished. I understood that to be caught in the mist in that place was to stay there ; and there would be no rescue parties to search for us.

Knowing this, and perceiving the cotton-wool clouds gathering in ever thicker masses upon the peak behind, it was difficult to refrain from over-hastiness in our flight from those eerie solitudes, but I kept before me the danger of accident and resolutely refused to be hurried. I mapped out each detour before I began it ; the edges of the chasms could not be distinguished until one was within a few yards of them, but the lie

of the ground gave some indication of their whereabouts. I would have retraced my steps to the big rock on the plateau, but so twisted and involved had been our progress since leaving it that I had no confidence in being able to return.

For half an hour we walked in circles over the lava and among the rocks ; our objective plain before us, but always cut off by chasms. It grew steadily colder and darker. I did not know where the tiny crater was, I could see no signs of it, but the saw-toothed ridge of rocks was distinct enough, and however we were forced to turn and twist we still tried to reach it. Suddenly a ravine, along the edge of which we were walking, turned at right angles and let us through. In a few minutes we reached the ridge and could look back over the innocent-seeming plain of lava on which we had walked a mile or more to gain five hundred yards. The peak was completely hidden, the mist was billowing along the plateau. As I watched, the rock where I had hidden the Nugget tin was blotted from view. There was no time to waste ; we scrambled over the slabs as fast as we could.

Once on the tussocks again I had thought to make better speed. I found the descent more difficult than the climb ; falling downhill is more fatiguing than falling up. In desperate haste we plunged down that treacherous slope. Every few paces we stepped upon grass which had no solid earth beneath it, and the result was always a tumble. On several occasions I rolled over and over like a shot rabbit, twenty feet, before I came to rest. Over thick juicy grass, and sodden blood-red moss we lurched or crawled, whichever mode of progress seemed to fit the conditions, until, on the brink of a tiny stream, I called a halt for rest. I sat there gasping for

breath. I was wet through and sweating profusely, but as soon as I stopped moving I was conscious of the deadly, gripping cold of the heights. The stream froze in a few minutes, ice formed near its banks and gradually encroached upon the current until it was completely skinned over. I was on the point of exhaustion and Gachari was in no better case.

Never in my life have I tackled a harder proposition than those tussocks. I served in one of the hardest campaigns of history ; I have marched fifty-five miles in twenty-seven hours and fought a battle after it, but the Kenia tussocks had me beaten. The altitude was principally responsible. At nearly seventeen thousand feet man is not at his best ; the blood pounds in his head, his breath comes gustily, and his chest seems constricted by iron bands. When, in this condition, he has to walk over tussocks like thousands of arm-chairs placed four feet apart and covered with tablecloths, so that the gaps are not visible, and when this excellent joke is tilted to an angle of thirty degrees, he is apt to be in serious trouble.

I was within a mile of camp, but I did not know how I was to get there ; I had "conked out." Away out over the plains the sun was shining fiercely, but where I sat the sky was overcast and gloomy. It suddenly started to snow ! That made me move. I had experienced blizzards in Northern Canada and I knew their capabilities. To be a mile from camp in a heavy snow-storm was to be lost beyond hope of finding.

I have no clear recollection of reaching camp ; the boys told me that they heard shouting, and, having ventured out into the snow for a short distance, found Gachari and myself lying among the tussocks in a state of collapse. They got us back to camp, where

the warmth of the fire and plenty of hot tea soon revived us.

The snowfall continued heavily until mid-afternoon, then the weather cleared and the sun came out. It illuminated a scene of great beauty. The expanse of tussocks over which we had so laboriously clambered was a carpet of dazzling white, every rock was streaked with silver, but the peak remained shrouded in dense white vapour, from which it did not emerge for nearly a week !

I perceived that I had been inordinately lucky. This was the normal condition of the mountain-top : the snow lay thickly down to the fourteen-thousand-foot level, and only on the particular day of my arrival had it been melted by hot sunshine. Had the tussocks been covered with a pall of snow when I first reached them I should never have been able to gain the plateau.

No sooner had the sun appeared than we shouldered our loads and struck off on the homeward route. I had accomplished what I had set out to do ; I had no wish to dawdle on the top of Mount Kenia. The boys were of the same opinion as myself. Once their backs were turned to the summit I realised in what a state of uneasiness they had been ; they plunged down the hill at reckless speed, so that I had to get in front of them and restrain their eagerness, lest an accident happen.

A quarter of a mile below the Castle Rock I noticed a long bamboo standing isolated in the snow. I walked over to it and found it had been brought from the forest and stuck up at this spot for a landmark. From its top dangled an empty jam tin. Here was proof that some white man had penetrated as far as here, but why had he erected the sign ? Did it mark the extent of his exploration ? I looked round upon the snow-fields

stretching upwards to the mist-enshrouded peak. Had I found these conditions prevailing when I arrived I should have been unable to journey further ; I should have contented myself with the assumption that I had reached the snow-fields and was, in all probability, standing on the glaciers, under their white covering. It was extraordinary that I should have climbed to seventeen thousand feet without encountering deep snow. I remembered the saturated condition of the ground when I arrived, due, as I now understood, to a complete thaw—the little black trees petrified by hundreds of years of intense cold—I was convinced that I had found an unusual condition of warmth prevailing at that altitude, a condition which might not be repeated for many years.

Looking back, I saw an animal on the snow, across a valley. I focussed my glasses on it and made it out to be an ordinary spotted leopard. Now, what was he doing at that altitude ? There were rock-rabbits among the cliffs, but there were no small buck, pigs, or monkeys, upon which the leopard usually feeds.

Going back through the bamboos was quicker and easier than coming ; the way lay downhill and the path was already cut. There was no time wasted in wandering in the cedar forest ; by the setting of the sun we found our way to the camping site on the river, ten miles from the Forest Station. Here I spent the coldest night of the trip. The altitude could not have exceeded nine thousand feet, a mere trifle after the height from which we had descended, but the weather had turned colder and a chill damp mist filled the river valley. There was nothing but dry bamboo to burn ; all the trees were green and sappy. Bamboo canes flare up fiercely and burn out in a few minutes, so that I was obliged to sit

up feeding the fire all night. The next morning we trekked early and by midday reached the Forest Station, where I lunched with the Forester. In the afternoon I climbed aboard my pony and drifted down the hill to Nanyuki, feeling delighted to be done with walking for a time.

The rapid change from a high altitude to a low one produced curious sensations. The air seemed thicker to breathe, my senses of hearing and touch were sharpened ; I felt buoyant and energetic. I have heard that hill climbing is a splendid tonic ; I can vouch for its beneficial effects in my case. I never felt better in my life than during the days immediately following my return to Nanyuki.

There was a curious epilogue to this adventure. A friend wrote to the Nugget Company telling them that I had placed one of their boot-polish tins on the top of Mount Kenia. This firm sent me three complete outfits of boot-cleaning materials—brushes, pads and polish. A year later I received a letter from them telling me that a firm in Sweden had become interested in my story. It seems the wife of a Swedish professor had won an advertising competition inaugurated by the Nugget Company. The professor was about to make an expedition to Kenya, and proposed to climb Mount Kenia and recover the tin left by me on the summit. The Swedish firm offered a reward for this tin, which they intended to display in their shop windows. They would also pay me fifty pounds if the professor found the tin. I was advised to get into touch with Mr. R. O. Hamilton, of Nairobi, the Nugget Company's agent. I have never been averse from picking up fifty pounds for nothing. I lost no time in interviewing Mr. Hamilton. He informed me that all details of the affair were known ; it

now remained to wait quietly for the arrival of the professor, to whom I must give directions for finding the polish tin. I waited five years for that professor, but he never arrived.

Somewhere I have a cutting from a Swedish newspaper, giving all the particulars of this thrilling expedition which did not come off; at least I suppose that is what it does, it is all in Swedish and I cannot understand it. In a crevice of a huge black rock, upon the edge of a chasm below the peak of Mount Kenia, the Nugget Company's boot-polish tin is slowly rusting away. Won't someone go and find it and give me my fifty pounds? If no one does, I will go myself one day and bring it back to civilisation to the music of brass bands and the clicking of cinematograph cameras, which is the profitable way to go exploring.

CHAPTER IV

SAFARI TATU

A FEW years ago my wife and I decided to make a safari quite by ourselves. Since one must have an object in these affairs, we fixed upon the acquisition of a big lion skin as the purpose of our trip. We had been living in Nairobi for a year, and this was the longest period I had spent in a town for fifteen years. It was no wonder that I felt the wilderness calling.

There are two satisfactory ways of going on safari—surrounded by every luxury, or dependent upon oneself for comfort and amusement, without assistance. In the first instance one has tents, beds, cooks, table boys, and porters ; there is nothing wanting for complete enjoyment of the chase and the country, except perhaps the feeling that one is missing something which only hard work and solitude can provide. In the second instance there is the joy of effort and the thrill of accomplishment. It is the difference between touring in a Rolls-Royce with a chauffeur and trudging along the by-ways, knapsack on back, and staff in hand. Of the two methods I prefer the latter.

I had an old Ford car which I had driven over a considerable part of Kenya and Tanganyika. Its engine bore the date 1914. I had equipped it with an aluminium box-body, something like a tradesman's delivery van, with a canvas top, supported by iron uprights. I was in the habit of loading this car up to eight hundred

pounds and, thus burdened, it travelled over roads that no "luxury waggon" could have traversed. On this occasion "Lizzie" carried food for two weeks, bedding, a tarpaulin, cooking-pots, guns, our two selves, and Mick the dog. Her running boards were decorated with oddments which would not fit inside—tins of petrol and water, a bag of potatoes, and the like.

Our destination was Bagdammit, two hundred miles away in the heart of Masailand. I had never been to this place before, but a white hunter of my acquaintance had told me that two years previously, when he had visited it, there were plenty of lions there, and he thought they would be there still.

We started from Nairobi early one morning filled with anticipation of an expedition into unknown country and dangers unforeseen. It was Babs' first long safari. She had been with me into Masailand for an odd day or two, but these had been strictly pleasure excursions, with no lion hunting as part of the programme. Most women consider they are running risks when they go after lions with a big safari. Consider the fortitude of my wife, who gleefully accompanied me into the wilderness without tent, or bed, or native! She knew what lions were too; she was brought up in the country and has seen her father turn out into the night in his pyjamas to shoot lions that were worrying the stock. There are many kinds of courage; there is the kind begotten of ignorance, and this is frequently in evidence in big-game hunting.

Many people travel to Africa, shoot lions, and return to their civilised homes without ever realising the dangers they have risked. Of course, in the midst of a camp of twenty natives one is as safe as one ever is anywhere, because no animal likes meddling with a multitude of

enemies ; and in shooting a lion with white hunters and gun-bearers surrounding one there is little risk, but the fact remains that once a dangerous animal is wounded he is a potential killer, and the only force to decide the issue is force of arms. I have confidence in meeting these dangers single-handed because I am accustomed to doing so, but Babs was forced to rely on my knowledge and ability ; and should an accident happen, the responsibility of saving my life and her own would devolve upon her. If you have ever travelled in a racing-car as a passenger you will realise something of her feelings, but unless you have travelled in a racing-car fifty miles from any human assistance you will not realise the extent of her anxiety.

At that time I gave little thought to these matters. I was off on an adventure such as I had often experienced before ; I was quite confident and happy, encountering dangers which had long since lost their significance for me, and I could not see things through my wife's eyes. I now realise that she had considerable cause for alarm and that her conduct throughout the safari deserved the highest praise.

We passed through Limuru, swept down the escarpment, and turned off the road into the track leading to Narok, which is the Government boma of Masailand. The track traverses the Kedong Valley between the volcanoes of Suswa and Longonot. The former of these is extinct, but from the latter smoke may be seen rising on a rainy day. The Kedong is the Valley of Desolation. It is very hot, the soil is friable and shallow, strewn with lava, and grown with stunted, ugly thorns. For fifty miles there is no water, except at Quarantine, where lives a native in charge of a tank from which he sells water at two shillings a kerosene tin full. Quarantine

was once a Government post, established for the inoculation of Masai cattle. By the time the traveller reaches it he has passed over twenty miles of dusty desert and both he and his car need a drink. They can get it at two shillings a tin.

The first time I slept on the veld at Quarantine there were a dozen lions grunting round me all night long ; the last time I slept there I did not hear a lion. This is because Nairobi sportsmen have gone out and shot them all. The Athi Plains to the east of Nairobi and Quarantine to the north, have provided most of the lion skins which decorate the homes of English and American tourists. I should not like to say how many thousand lions have been shot in these two districts. At one time the supply seemed inexhaustible, but nowadays one would be lucky to see a lion there.

I cannot imagine two more unpleasant spots in which to hunt. The Athi Plains are bare and flat ; the knee-high grass is dry and brittle and swarming with small red ticks. These ticks penetrate to one's skin through every protective covering ; they leave tiny festering wounds which irritate for weeks afterwards. After one day's hunting on the Athi my legs have been so thick with ticks that one would have thought them densely freckled. It is hot, shadeless, and what water there is, is bad. At Quarantine there are less ticks and more flies ; it is hotter and drier. In both places there are plenty of kongoni (hartebeest) and zebra, but the animals stand out on the shadeless plains, and "hunting" them consists of walking about and shooting at long range.

Now, the majority of sportsmen who come to Kenya wish to shoot lions. The professional hunters who take them out are concerned with satisfying their clients'

desires as speedily as possible, and for many years they used to take them to the Athi Plains or Quarantine. The sportsman got his lions ; he returned to Europe or America with the impression that Kenya was an arid, uncomfortable country of plains and thorn bush, interspersed with rocky dongas and kopjies, and teeming with flies and ticks. All the wonderful high-veld of Molo and Laikipia, all the magnificent forests of Mount Kenia and the Aberdares, remained unknown to him—but he got his lions.

When I was in the safari business I used to urge my clients to visit districts where game was scarcer and more difficult to shoot, but where the scenery and the hunting life was paradise. I found that my clients did not care twopence about scenery and magnificent living ; they wanted to kill things—the more the better. I took them where the slaughter was sure and safe.

Nowadays, the Serengetti Plains is the place for this. I had one millionaire party who shot nineteen lions from motor-lorries in three mornings. They did not walk ; they raced over the veld in three motor-trucks, and what they caught up with they shot. One favourite amusement was shooting birds and small buck with .22 repeaters. In three weeks these four men fired off eight hundred rounds of .22, and over four hundred rounds of heavier ammunition. When I remonstrated I was told they had come to Africa to shoot, not to loaf about ; they did not intend to take ammunition back home with them. The white hunter is in an awkward position with such clients. If he objects to their methods they discharge him and employ another man, besides spreading reports about him which are damaging to his reputation. Unfortunately there are plenty of hunters

who will connive at infringements of the game laws, and the wealthy client has not far to seek for such men.

The Game Department endeavours, with its limited staff, to prevent the wholesale massacre of game animals, but its efforts do not meet with much success. Every few weeks a party of half-drunken young men and women will set out at night from Nairobi to visit the game reserve five miles away. They drive over the veld in motor-cars, headlights and spotlights blazing, and when they find a herd of kongoni or zebra they chase it, firing right and left with rifles, shot-guns, and revolvers. They do not stop for dead and wounded, but leave them lying and go careering madly on their drunken way, spreading death and suffering over the veld. When these things happen native game spies hurry on foot into town to persuade some European or Indian to telephone the Game Warden's house and tell him what is happening. Perhaps the Game Warden is at the Club, or dining out somewhere; perhaps he is in bed. If he can be found, he jumps into a car and drives to the scene of carnage, by which time the roisterers are back in a Nairobi hotel consuming more champagne. To my knowledge not one of these parties has been caught.

Then there is the man who poaches game for business reasons, either to sell to the natives or to Europeans for dogs' meat. I know of one man in Nairobi who for years has fed his pigs on buck meat which he shoots from a motor-car in the game reserve at night. But these wrong-doers do not accomplish a tithe of the damage effected by licensed sportsmen in pursuit of their legitimate pleasure.

There is a feeling of injustice about that visitor's

licence. Most visitors who go shooting big game are American business men. When they pay a hundred pounds for a licence to shoot game they intend to have their money's worth. The law allows the killing of a number of animals of each species, and in the case of the commoner species the licensed number is so large that no one could possibly want to avail themselves of it. The Government says : " Pay me your hundred pounds and I will give you permission to shoot a large quantity of animals ; far more than you want to shoot." The visitor not unnaturally replies that he would be satisfied with half the quantity for half the money, but having been forced to pay the full amount he does not see why he should not take every advantage of his slaughter permit. This is why you may see safari trucks returning to Nairobi after a trip in the blue with their occupants blazing away at every buck they pass, " getting the odd ones they have paid for." As a man expressed it when he shot two kongoni and left them lying : " It's my meat. I bought it ; I'll do what I like with it." This is how the commercial mind functions when directed to the sport of hunting.

The useless slaughter of African game might be checked by two simple regulations. Every white hunter should be sworn as an honorary game warden and every culprit should be imprisoned without the option of a fine. No wealthy sportsman would run the risk of imprisonment and no hunter would hesitate to warn a client when he could shelter himself behind his official position. It would be a case of " I should like to oblige you, Mr. Smith, by helping you to shoot more lions than you are entitled to, but I dare not run the risk of having my licence taken away and being deprived of my livelihood."

White hunters should form a trade union and stand firmly together. They live by the game ; its decimation makes their work harder and their reward less certain. They should have no scruples in "peaching" upon any blackleg, who transgresses the rules of sportsmanship for what is, after all, a doubtful advantage. Some of the better-known hunters will stand no nonsense ; men like Pat Ayre and J. A. Hunter cannot be bribed or intimidated, and every hunter should be able to feel that he has the support and assistance of such men, working in collaboration with the Government to prevent the exploitation of their country and its resources by unprincipled butchers from overseas. The true sportsman from Europe and America would welcome any arrangement to preserve the hunting grounds, and the butcher, who will never admit that he is not a sportsman, would not care to protest.

When visitors make their first appearance on the veld they are eager to secure a lion ; it is only the lax morality and boastful superiority of the residents which influence them to believe that dead lions should be counted in dozens by the successful hunter. In fifteen years' hunting I shot fewer lions than many visitors have shot in a week. I have derived more satisfaction from those I did not shoot than from those I did.

It seems to me that hunting should be done mainly with a camera. It is far more difficult to photograph an animal than to shoot it, and, unless the photographer roosts in a tree, it is far more dangerous. Such photographers as Major Dugmore, Paul Hoefler, and Cherry Kearton command my admiration for the courage they display in standing near to dangerous beasts, occupied with a harmless camera. Of course there are skilled hunters and dead shots in attendance to see that the

photographer does not come to harm while making his picture but, personally, I would rather stand by the camera with a rifle, than operate it. A rifle has a more comforting feel than a camera when there is an elephant or a rhino within twenty paces. The only time I ever tried to photograph a charging beast I was nearly ripped up, and I didn't get the picture either !

What has happened to my safari ? I seem to have travelled a long way on paper and a very little way on the road.

We left Quarantine, the accursed spot, behind us, and pushed on through plain and thorn-bush to the Southern Euasso Nyiro. I am very fond of that river ; there are excellent camping spots upon its banks and interesting bush to wander in, but on this occasion we passed it by to camp up on the Loita Plains nearer to our objective. The Loita was once famous game country. Ten years ago it was shot to bits by visiting sportsmen, and now all the big safari pass it by on their way to the Serengetti, where lions still walk about at midday and eat their meals before an audience.

When hunters stop harrying a district the game begins to drift back into it, and this is what has happened on the Loita Plains. There are now plenty of lions there, but, warned by the fate of their predecessors, they are not obtrusive. It might be thought that since the sport of hunting implies difficulty and determination in bagging the quarry, sportsmen would rejoice in pursuing creatures whose sense and discretion are keener than those of the majority of their kind, but it is not so. The sportsman requires things made easy for him ; his delight lies in pulling the trigger without delay, not in stalking and hiding. In England he will sit on a stool while a band of rustics drive birds within range of his

gun, in preference to hunting these birds in field and covert, thereby learning something of woodcraft, reducing his waist measurement, and sharpening his faculties and his appetite. In Africa he wants to shoot animals in the same way ; that is, with the minimum of discomfort and the maximum of despatch. The white hunter knows this well. He makes straight for the spot where the animals are so tame that they will stand at the end of the rifle-barrel until the bullet knocks them down. When the client has shot a few unsuspecting creatures in this way he discovers that there is little danger or fatigue and begins thoroughly to enjoy himself. As one millionaire expressed it : " Shootin' lions is just like shootin' rabbits." It is—the way he did it. It is like doping a heavyweight champion, introducing him to a Folies Bergères star, and hitting him over the head from behind, with a club—there is nothing dangerous about it, if you have another heavyweight champion to take your part should the club not strike true.

It is most unkind of me to poke fun at these horn-rimmed heroes, but they deserve it. You should see them take the trail of an animal like a rhino, who lives in thick bush and cannot be shot at from a long distance. First will come a white hunter, slightly bored and contemptuous of the whole business ; then a gun-bearer, carrying a spare rifle which he is instructed to use in defence of his master's life should the necessity arise ; then the intrepid sportsman, followed by more gun-bearers, another white hunter, and half a dozen skinners. The rhino is discovered, dozing beneath a bush, the sportsman shoots ; the quarry either falls, runs away, or charges. In either of the two latter eventualities the white hunters get busy. Men who can hit a saucer at fifty paces nine times in ten, bombard the wretched beast

with rifles delivering blows of over a ton. Down goes the rhino as though hit by a thunderbolt ; the sportsman poses for his photograph with his foot on the carcass while the rest of the army keep well out of the picture.

I thought about all these things as I drove my old car over the sunny Loita Plains, feeling exceedingly glad that I was not piloting a party of wealthy visitors in search of notoriety. It was a glorious November evening at the close of the short rains. The veld was unusually green, most of the dongas held water, and the Masai had moved into the district with their flocks and herds to take advantage of the good grazing. Away to our right loomed the forest-clad slopes of the Mau, a mysterious unknown range, wherein live the legendary horrors of the Lumbwa—the chemoiset and the katet.

The chemoiset is the famous “Nandi bear.” No white man has ever seen him, but the Forest Officer at Ravine made a drawing of his spoor. He is supposed to be an enormous hyena with feet like a man. He lives in the impenetrable forests of the Mau and the Nandi Escarpment, from whence he descends upon the native villages to kill women and children. The chemoiset is the only beast of whom the Lumbwa are afraid ; and they are very much afraid of him. According to them he is more terrible than man-eating lion or rogue elephant. I once spent six weeks hunting along the fringes of these forests for traces of this creature, but all I found was a ten-foot black mamba who nearly made an end of me and my dogs. Whenever I see the Mau with its welter of hills and ravines I long to explore it thoroughly, but so far I have not had the opportunity. I have a feeling that I shall attempt it, one day.

The Loita Plains are the home of the wilderbeeste ; I have never seen so many of these animals gathered

together in any other spot. The wilderbeeste, or gnu, is an ox-like animal about as big as a yearling steer, and equipped with sharp, curved horns. Those one sees in zoological gardens are generally from South Africa, a smaller and less impressive breed. This holds true of most wild animals in captivity—elephant, rhinoceros, buffalo, giraffe, are all very much bigger in their wild state, so that the visitor to the Zoo gets a poor impression of the actual size and appearance of these animals as they look to the hunter and explorer.

The wilderbeeste is a great bluffer. In the wet weather when the bulls stand about by themselves they resent the approach of man and try to frighten him away by snorting and shaking their heads at him. On the wide lonely veld, against the distant blue sky-line, they look powerful, formidable beasts, but if the man advances steadily towards them, undismayed by their threatening attitude, their courage fails and they gallop off; for at heart the wilderbeeste is a coward and he will not fight unless driven to do so by desperation. The appearance and apparent savagery of these animals often cause them to be mistaken for buffalo. This is ridiculous, of course. When one has seen a buffalo there is no comparison between the saucy, boastful gnu and the huge sinister monarch of the forests, but tyros are frequently deceived and one becomes accustomed to hearing tales of thrilling encounters with buffalo herds on the open veld.

I recommended a settler to take his annual holidays on the Loita one year. When he returned he recounted an adventure with a buffalo. He had been driving his car up out of the bush on to the veld one evening, when he saw a great black beast standing in the track. It did not move as he approached. He alighted from his car,

took his rifle and went forward on foot. When he was within fifty yards of the beast it snorted and shook its head at him. He returned to his car and drove away ; he did not feel able to tackle a savage buffalo single-handed. From his description I recognised that he had been successfully bluffed by a wilderbeeste, a creature one-fourth the size of the *bos caffir*.

When a man "thinks" he has seen a buffalo or a lion you may be sure that he has not. There is no mistaking either of these animals—none whatever. No matter if a man has never before clapped eyes on an animal more dangerous than a savage dog, when he sees the real thing his heart stands still, he has no doubts about whether he has seen a *scehlm* or not. To encounter a lion or a buffalo for the first time, alone, is like meeting the devil himself.

Besides the great herds of wilderbeeste, there are tommy, granti, topi, ostrich, zebra, and giraffe on the Loita, but there are no elephants or buffalo ; those creatures keep to the forests and the thick bush.

We hummed along the narrow white track leading to the Kilimafeza gold mine, between numerous herds of animals which, having seen many motor-cars pass that way, stood to stare at us like deer in a park.

A dog knows that a motor-car is dangerous only when it is moving ; a buck knows that it is dangerous only when it stops. When I stopped my car on the top of a breezy down, every living thing promptly removed itself beyond effective range of my rifle. Nevertheless, one tommy was too careless ; I got a shot at him at two hundred and fifty yards and knocked him down. Unfortunately he jumped up again and moved behind a little bush. I was ready for him when he reappeared and bowled him over again. Then I drove the car across the veld to pick up the meat. As I neared the

carcass I was astonished to see another tommy going off in the distance, in the uncertain manner of a wounded animal. I got my glasses on it and made out a dark stain on its side. It seems that the buck which appeared from behind the bush had been standing there all along, and was not the one I had first shot at.

I was annoyed and remorseful ; I had no use for more than one buck—even one would provide more meat than I could use. I always get into trouble when I wound a buck ; Babs thinks I should kill everything outright or leave it alone. I had to finish this one off somehow, but it is no easy job to catch a wounded buck on the open veld. The thomson's gazelle is a graceful creature, the size of a greyhound, but like all African animals it has amazing vitality ; it can outdistance a man after its leg has been broken, or its stomach pierced, by a bullet.

Now there is one thing I want to say about shooting. What a man hits, he should get. Failure to finish off a wounded beast admits of no excuse. A man who leaves a creature wounded on the veld because he is too lazy or too inefficient to hunt it down and kill it, is like a man who leaves a horse in a field with its leg broken and its entrails protruding, until it dies of exhaustion ; he is either a brute or he is entitled to consider himself one.

I have lost a number of wounded animals. Whenever I think of these episodes I shudder, and my conscience becomes as active as a nagging tooth, but I can console myself with one reflection : I have always kept after the wounded beast for the remainder of the day, and an animal that can keep out of rifle range for that length of time is almost certain to recover.

In this instance I drove the car as fast as the uneven ground would permit on the trail of the buck and loosed

Mick with instructions to hold it. Very soon we heard the excited barking of the dog and, in a little hollow, came upon the buck standing at bay with its horns presented to the enemy. It was hit through the stomach and its intestines were protruding. I shot it through the head from behind, before it was aware of my presence. A pair of jackals stood in the grass fifty yards away and watched me do it ; they were already on the trail of the buck, and that night, had I not intervened, would have fought the wretched animal to a standstill and killed it by inches.

Having loaded the meat, we continued on over the veld to a water-course which, after the rains, was running. There was a fringe of bush along the water-course and, luckily enough, some dead wood for making fires. In the Masai country there is a dearth of firewood because every water-hole is a camping site and the natives have for hundreds of years consumed every dry stick in the vicinity. The presence of fuel at this spot showed that the river did not often run and was seldom used as a camping site.

There was a native manyatta half a mile away, but its occupants did not seem to be aware of our presence. For this we were not sorry. The curse of African travel is the interest and excitement occasioned among the natives by the arrival of Europeans in their midst. They stand and gape. When one has to perform one's toilet and eat one's food under the curious eyes of a dozen native women and children, it becomes annoying and embarrassing. Should one chase them away it is the signal for a rare game ; they stand at a safe distance and shout insults for hours on end.

Privacy is an unknown word to the lower orders of mankind. In civilised places people of low class will

live packed like sardines. They like a crowd ; they will discuss their personal affairs, quarrel, and even conduct their love-making under the eyes of their neighbours. Natives are just the same. They cannot understand why anyone should object to being studied at his meals or ablutions like an animal in a cage. Natives in the employ of white people soon come to understand that their masters and mistresses object to this surveillance, and if one takes servants on safari they guard one's privacy from the feeble-minded barbarian of the plains, but if one travels alone there is no escape from figuring as a peep-show.

They never steal anything in a native reserve. You may walk off and leave your camp all day and be certain that on your return nothing is missing. The explanation of this is simple. It is not due to the inherent honesty of the savage which travellers are so fond of quoting ; it is a matter of policy. Primitive man is as much a thief as a monkey, he will take anything he can get away with.

The Administrative Officers, those much-maligned men who, if given a free hand, would rule the native peoples with the wisdom of Solomons, hold the chiefs responsible for crimes committed in their districts. The District Commissioners understand the natives ; they spend their whole lives learning to understand them. They work in concert with the chiefs to preserve law and order and, since the chiefs have no experience of legal procedure, everything goes wonderfully smoothly.

Should a white man complain of a theft in a native reserve, the District Commissioner calls up the chief and orders him to punish the delinquent. The chief tells the headman of the village nearest to where the

theft took place that if the stolen goods and the thief are not produced, he will fine him so many head of cattle. The headman passes this news on to his people, informing them that they will have to furnish the cattle to pay the fine. The relatives and friends of the thief cannot see the fun of paying for someone else's crime ; they produce the wrongdoer in preference to the cattle in almost every instance. Owing to this arrangement every native is convinced that crime does not pay. Crime is therefore prevented, instead of punished after its perpetration—a lesson to civilised communities.

Unfortunately, Westminister never ceases to interfere with the Administrative Officers' methods of ruling the natives. Worthy gentlemen who have visited Africa, shaken hands with numerous chiefs, and asked them questions through the medium of an interpreter in phrases which are quite unintelligible to the untutored savage, feel themselves competent to devise laws for the guidance of the native administration. These men cannot distinguish between a Masai and a Kavirondu at sight, they call them all " negroes " and frame laws to govern them, irrespective of tribal custom, climatic conditions, or intelligence. This is bad enough, but they do not stop at broad considerations of policy : they draw up rules covering the most minute procedure of government, and the district magistrate of Africa is obliged to observe the methods of a London police court in dealing with a people who consider perjury praiseworthy, imprisonment a holiday, and jurisprudence a joke.

Periodically journalists and authors make rapid tours of the principal towns of Africa, in which they see and understand about as much of the conditions of the country and the mentality of the people as a Chinese mandarin would do in a " personally conducted " tour

of England. These people have no hesitation in writing books and articles on native policy, "the Black Peril" and similar rubbish. To them the savage, lawless Zulu is the same as the timid, peaceful Kikuyu : they are all "negroes," with the same mentality, the same ambitions, as the "coloured gentleman" of the Southern States of America. We will abandon this distasteful topic with a few "pahs!" and "pishes!" of disgust, and return to the saner subject of making camp on the Loita Plains.

The river turned sharply in a horseshoe bend, and in the centre of this we brought the car to rest. I unloaded and spread the tarpaulin over the hood to form a shelter, while Babs built a fire and made tea. A tarpaulin is a useful thing on safari ; it is not as heavy and cumbersome as a tent and can be used for a variety of purposes. I piled our supplies and gear in one spot, brought the edges of the tarpaulin out from the car by means of a few uprights and tent pegs, and then put all our effects under cover. We were now reasonably secure in case of rain, and could enjoy our tea in peace. It was welcome after the long journey. While we drank it the sun set behind the hills and the clear cold light of evening gradually faded on the veld. The first stars began to show in a turquoise sky which grew steadily deeper in colour, hyenas raised their voices out on the darkening plains, late-homing beetles boomed overhead.

I carried the buck to a spot away from the camp, where I skinned and dismembered them ; Babs spread our blankets in the back of the car. There was an old dead tree standing within a few yards of our fire ; to a branch of this I hung the joints of meat, about six feet from the ground. By the time we had washed and prepared supper from tinned goods brought with us

the night had fallen, only the glow of the fire and the dim radiance of a lantern illuminated our camping site.

After the meal we pushed the dirty plates under the car to be attended to in the morning and turned into bed with sighs of thankfulness for the hours of rest ahead of us. But we were not to get through the night without disturbance. The hyenas scented the buck meat ; they were soon slinking round the camp trying to steal it. Mick was an old dog in those days, he had lost some teeth and energy, and he could not disperse the marauders without assistance. He kept up a continuous growling and occasionally dashed out, barking furiously, in defence of our property, but the hyenas were too numerous and too determined for him.

Being awakened for the fourth time by this commotion, I announced to Babs that we would have to turn out and shoot a hyena if we were to get any rest that night. It was cold and dark and we were very tired. We lay contemplating the unpleasant task for some minutes and then, suddenly, we heard a rip and a crash, the noise of swiftly galloping feet and the sound of something dragging. A hyena had leapt at a leg of buck, pulled it down and decamped with it.

That decided us ; we got up, groaning, found our shoes and sallied out into the cold night. The stars were shining brightly, but it was too dark to see anything at twenty paces. Babs carried the torch, a three-cell flash-light, and I took the rifle. We advanced to the tree from which our meat had been stolen, and Babs sent a long beam of light flickering over the veld. Several pairs of green eyes reflected it. There was one brute a hundred yards away, turned broadside to us. I could just make out his shape, remote and ghostly in the misty light. I knelt down in front of the torch so that

it shone on my rifle sights, then I took careful aim and knocked that hyena flying.

At the sound of the shot Mick was away like an arrow from the bow ; he assured himself that the hyena was dead, and pursued the others right and left over the veld. They did not run far, but turned upon the dog and warned him off. We followed the chase, treading carefully among thorny, heathery plants, picking up green eyes with the light every now and then, but never getting near enough for a shot. Mick's eyes were not unlike those of the hyenas ; I dared not shoot hastily for fear of killing the dog. We wandered about over the veld until we were thoroughly chilled, then we returned to camp, satisfied that we had taught the thieves a lesson. They did not worry us much for the remainder of the night and, fortunately, no lions or leopards paid us a visit.

At dawn we were astir and, having washed up our crockery and disposed of a hearty breakfast, we struck camp and continued our way. This led through a pass in a range of hills, over several dry water-courses difficult of negotiation, across plains of stunted thorn bush, and, eventually, into a valley, ringed round with rocky escarpments. This was the spot we had come so far to seek. The valley was heavily grown with eleleshwa bush and, in places, large trees. At one end was a small spring trickling down into a water-hole encircled by a thorn fence, made by the Masai to prevent game from fouling the water. Within a hundred yards of this water-hole we found a secluded dell, shaded by a tall bushy tree, and here we made our camp.

It was rather an eerie, uncomfortable spot. At certain times of the year a strong wind blows throughout this country, all day and all night. The big trees rock and

creak, the commotion in their branches is like the rush of a river, or the unrest of a stormy sea. Lying out at night beneath this tempest which wails and whoops above one's shelter the darkness seems peopled by spirits and uncanny dangers, the mind becomes depressed with forebodings of disaster. Fierce beasts are slinking through the gloom, their presence cannot be detected in the uproar. Only the power of scent remains efficacious in darkness and noise, and man's faithful companion lies at his feet, testing the wind with quivering nose, betraying by all the symptoms of disquiet and alertness the imminence of danger.

Mick was a nervy companion during those nights in the hollow. He knew more of the wilderness than any man ; his whole life had been spent in contact with perils and alarms ; he had survived experiences such as seldom fall to the lot of any but wild beasts. Two leopards had mauled this old warrior ; he had been wounded in combats with wild pigs, buck, lions, and men. He knew the feel of fang and claw, and tusk and spear, and he still lived to hunt and fight with his master. But he was not the dog he had been. The last leopard had taken him off the verandah in the night while he lay asleep ; it carried him fifty yards before a rifle shot made it drop him, and he had lain six weeks recovering from his wounds. His senses had been dulled by age ; he was nervous, unsure of himself in the hunting-grounds of spotted demons who wage eternal warfare with his kind.

Neither he nor we liked the camp in the hollow, but we stayed there six days, for the next morning we received unmistakable evidence of the presence of a big lion in the valley. In exploring the valley we surprised two impala stags on a bushy hill a mile behind our

camp. One of them had a fine head ; I shot it, removed the head-skin, and left the carcass under a bush. We went on down the valley to another little spring, somewhat clearer than the one on which we were camped. Here in the mud was the spoor of lion—big lion ! The floor of the valley was covered with bush, interspersed by little open glades. There were some big trees about, and under one of them were the remains of the boma my friend had built during his visit two years before. It had been a well-constructed boma, built into the heart of the bushy tree whose drooping branches shielded it on all sides, but the ravages of time had played havoc with it. The thorns were dead and brittle ; at back and front they were no more than six inches thick, and one could thrust a hand through them without suffering injury. A poor defence against lions, and I had been warned that these lions were fierce and liable to attack man on sight ! Nevertheless it was an ideal hide-up. The bushy tree looked quite natural, the boma had been there so long that its presence would cause no suspicion ; the hurly of the wind in the branches would disguise all sound of movement within. We had no labourers to strengthen the boma, and in any case I did not wish to arouse suspicion by cutting new bush. We decided to risk it.

In the afternoon we shot a dik-dik with the .22 rifle. The dik-dik is a merry little buck, like a hare on long legs. The valley was full of them. In the evening they raced and gambolled in every glade, uttering shrill whistles of alarm whenever they saw us, dashing off among the bushes with a kick of the heels betokening high spirits and contempt. In all my life I have not shot more than six dik-dik ; I do not like killing such jolly little creatures. I knew a man who shot over a hundred on one safari

to make his wife a kaross from their pelts. He was the same man who fled from the wilderbeeste which he thought was a buffalo.

It had been Mick's ambition since puppyhood to catch a dik-dik. He never succeeded in his prime, but even now that he was an old dog he still hoped. Of course, when serious hunting was toward, he was not allowed to engage in this frivolous pastime, but when the work of the day was over and he received permission to amuse himself he chased dik-dik at every opportunity, yapping in a shrill excited voice, tearing round bushes and through glades after the speedy little buck, who eluded him with derisive ease. If there are dik-dik in the hereafter Mick will be satisfied; perhaps he will accomplish more without his rotund body and short legs to hinder him.

We spent the night in the hollow with another gale of wind rushing overhead. The next morning I visited the glade where I had left the impala. It had vanished. I inspected the trees and the soil round about. Hyenas would have dragged the kill, a leopard would have concealed it in a near-by tree; there were no signs of it anywhere, therefore a lion had taken it.

There were dense clumps of bush on the side of the hill; in any one of them the lion might have his lair, but I had no intention of seeking it in that thick cover. Since simba had come to one kill, he would come to another. We must provide another kill for him. I returned to camp, got the car, and drove it out on to the veld. Within a mile of the valley we came within range of a tommy, which I shot. The carcass was loaded into the car; we went on after another. I shot that one at a hundred yards, walked up to it to make sure it was dead, and then returned to the car. By the time I had reached

it a flock of vultures were already tearing at the dead buck, and before we could scare them away they had made considerable inroads upon it.

The two kills were transported to the boma and tied up ten yards from the loopholes. We intended to use the electric torch, and it was not necessary to have the kill within a few feet, as in sky-line shooting. We were short of rope; I fastened the buck with two long, inch-wide straps, belonging to Babs' valise, which we used for packing our blankets. There was a discussion about this; she did not want her straps to be used for such a purpose, but I explained that they would not suffer any harm. The two straps were buckled together, wound round and round the carcasses of the buck, and securely fastened to a thorn tree.

At dusk we took up our position in the boma together with Mick, who could not be left in camp at the mercy of prowling leopards. We arranged ourselves as comfortably as possible and lay listening to the rushing of the wind in the leaves of the tree under which the boma was built, and the groaning and creaking of its branches. This noise, which prevented the animals from hearing our light movements and low-voiced conversation, also made it rather difficult for us to hear them. When night fell, we strained our eyes in staring at the kill but the darkness allowed us to see nothing. Very soon we heard the noise of some animal feeding; Babs switched on the torch and there was a leopard lying behind one of the buck, his head just showing above it. I fired—a little too hurriedly—and missed him by inches. This was very disappointing; we had begun our vigil by making a disturbance which might have been expected to scare every beast within a mile.

After a draught of coffee from our thermos flask we

settled down again to watch and listen. It was cold and we were tired, but we did not feel inclined to sleep in such a frail shelter with a noise going on sufficient to enable a lion to approach unheard. The thorns at the back of the boma were so thin that a beast might come through them without a check. The boughs of the tree descended to the ground on all sides and there was no view of the sky-line in any direction. On my side, the wall of the boma had been built against the tree trunk, and I reclined against this in a half-sitting position ; blankets huddled about me, rifle across my knees. Babs lay full length before the other loophole, holding the torch ready to focus it upon the kill. We had arranged that she should not press the button until I gave the word. I had confidence in my rifle—a .30 calibre Mauser, shooting a 220 grain bullet with a velocity of 2800 feet per second. I had never owned a rifle which suited me as well as that one ; the first eleven rounds I fired from it gave me ten kills.

At about midnight hyenas began to come round the kill. They were by no means bold ; they squawked and chuckled, walked about round the meat, and occasionally took hasty bites at it. There were all the indications of a lion's presence, but he gave no sign. I imagined him to be lying up near by but I had no idea he was as close to me as he was.

The night wore on and still the hyenas were not allowed to feed in peace, although the lion would not approach to take his supper. He was suspicious, and, since he had been well fed on impala meat the previous night, was not very hungry. I heard the noise of a big beast scratching itself the other side of the tree trunk against which I lent and the unmistakable sneeze of a lion. He had been lying within two yards of me all the

time, and between us was a six-inch screen of dead brushwood, through which I could have thrust my arm !

I said nothing to Babs ; I sat still and hoped for the best. Mick slept heavily between us. With the weight of years his breathing had become asthmatical ; when he slept he snored like a drunken sailor. The disturbance of the wind in the branches probably prevented this sound from reaching the beasts outside, but to us it sounded loud enough to wake the dead. This was the dog who had been so cunning and alert in his youth ; it saddened me to see the ravages of time affect this old hunter so and to reflect that to this condition we must all be brought, eventually.

At half-past one the lion got up, went to the kill, picked up a buck, and departed with it. There was no time to switch on the torch or to shoot ; one moment we were lying listening to the quarrelling of the hyenas, waiting for something to happen ; the next, it had happened, taking us completely by surprise. There was no further excitement for the rest of that night ; we went to sleep.

As soon as it was light enough to see we emerged from the boma to inspect the kill. One buck remained, half-eaten by hyenas ; the other had vanished with the straps that bound it. I could trace the passage of the lion, down into a little grassy hollow and up its other bank towards the hills. Mick's services were requisitioned ; we wanted our valise straps back. He led the way up across the hill-side at a steady walk, his old grey muzzle held to the ground, his one eye (the other had been poked out by a thorn years before) scrutinising each bush and hillock to which the trail led. It was an education to see that experienced hunter tracking the dangerous beast who had stolen our straps. He kept

just twenty paces ahead of us ; every few yards he looked back to see that we were following. At each clump of bush he stepped carefully sideways until he could see behind it, then, being assured the enemy was not there, he glanced at me, wagged his tail, and proceeded. There was no risk of bumping into that lion unexpectedly while Mr. Michael was in charge of operations.

At the end of a mile we came to a very thick clump of bush a hundred yards in circumference. A low, thorny tunnel led into it. Mick stopped at the entrance to this tunnel, tested the wind, turned his wise old head, and said, "He's in there !" I could well believe it ; it was just the sort of place he would lie up in. I had no intention of going in after him. We prowled round the bush, hoping to catch sight of the villain, but the thorns and leaves were too thick ; we had to give it up and return to camp.

In the afternoon I drove the car up to the boma to fetch out bedding. Half-way there Babs uttered an exclamation. The long tawny form of a lioness crossed our path fifty yards ahead, bounding away into the bush. I stopped the car and went after her, but she made good her retreat up the hill to the thicket in which her mate had sought cover that morning. It was apparent that a pair of lions had made a lair in that spot.

We continued our way to an outcrop of rock near the boma ; there we left the car and proceeded on foot. Feeding in the glade was a big impala stag. The opportunity was too good to miss ; I shot the animal, and together we hauled it, with infinite labour, up to the boma, where we tied it to the thorn tree among the bones of the previous night's kill. This time I used the tyre chains—and I doubled them ! We returned to camp, made a hearty meal of stewed guinea-fowl and,

as dusk was falling, reached the boma prepared for our second night's vigil.

The first part of the night passed quietly. The hyenas again seemed nervous and unwilling to feed with their accustomed voracity, but at about midnight they became bolder and several violent quarrels took place over the kill. I was afraid they would demolish the meat so that nothing would be left for the lion when he arrived. A rifle shot the previous night had not prevented the lion from stealing a buck; I determined to shoot one of the hyenas to discourage the others, and to test our ability to make a clean kill from the boma, shooting by torchlight. At my signal, Babs switched on the light; there was a big spotted hyena standing over the kill. I shot him and he pushed off to fall in the little grassy hollow a few yards away. We heard him growling and groaning there for a minute or two; then once again silence descended upon the veld, save for the continuous rushing noise of the wind.

Within an hour the hyenas were back again at their meal, scolding and quarrelling as before. At such times it sounds as if there were dozens of them dragging at the carcass, ripping off huge chunks of meat and making away with them piecemeal, but there is a lot of meat on a big buck and it takes a score of scavengers all night to finish it.

We heard a big fellow come hurrying up to the feast; he chased the others right and left and then started to eat with loud, satisfied scrunchings. Suddenly he stopped. There was dead silence; then we heard the noise of galloping feet—the hyena had run for his life. I nudged Babs with my foot; I knew what was about to happen. Everything was quiet; the wind

paused in its violence ; there was a pregnant hush, in which Mick's snores sounded like an anchor chain running out of a hawse-pipe. Babs piled blankets on top of him ; the old dog woke up and flopped his tail apologetically. Babs was lying at full length peering through the loophole ; suddenly she saw a huge maned head within a yard of her outlined against the sky. It was her first sight of a male lion, alive, on his native heath. She never moved a muscle while the great beast stood listening. Then, when he turned away to the kill, she whispered to me—"There is a *huge* lion !" and I have never heard such awe expressed in a whisper. It must be remembered that the lion stood about four feet six inches high, while she lay prone ; between them was a single row of dead sticks placed upright in the ground and tied together with withered bark. It is no wonder that she was awe-stricken.

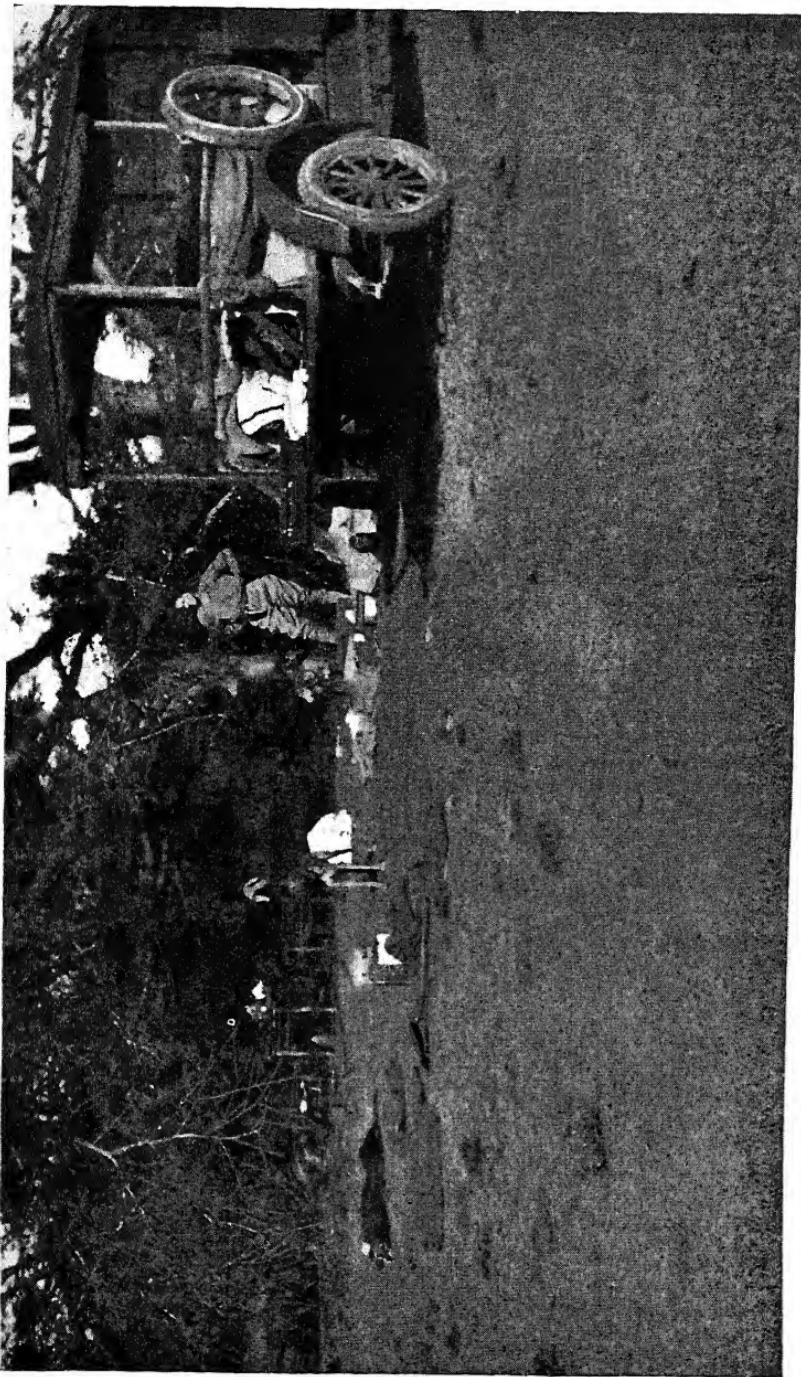
According to her the lion appeared suddenly without a sound. One moment she had been looking at the empty sky, bright with stars ; the next, that great head with its mantle of hair had uprisen before her—turned sideways, listening. I sat still until I heard our visitor begin his meal. At the sound of the first crunch I began to flatten down, an inch at a time, until my face came against the rifle stock and my eyes could see out through the loophole. The noise of feeding was loud ; the veld was dark and obscure, but I trained the rifle on where I imagined the kill to be, turned the safety catch, and whispered "Right !"

Promptly a thin pencil of light cut the gloom. It shone straight on the kill and on the beast feeding from it. He was a big yellow-maned lion. He lay broadside-on to us, his forepaws on the buck, his head held sideways like a cat, as he chewed. His face was wrinkled up and his

savage eyes reflected the torchlight, redly. He never moved as the light illumined him, he continued to chew, sighing with satisfaction. I brought the sights on to his shoulder immediately, and then I experienced a curious reluctance to pull the trigger. He was a noble beast and it did not seem fair to kill him as he fed. But we had come two hundred miles to shoot him ; he had slain many beasts without mercy in his lifetime ; his own end had come as it comes to all wild things—suddenly and without warning. I hardened my heart and pressed the trigger. He uttered a terrific roar as the bullet struck him, rose high in the air in a magnificent leap, and landed on his forepaws a dozen yards away. He rolled completely over, but was up again on his hind legs in an instant, striking at the air and roaring like a demon.

Throughout his flight through the air the light had never left him ; in obedience to instructions Babs kept the torch focussed upon the quarry from first to last. I had been afraid that she would fumble at the critical moment, that the beast would escape from our range of vision to threaten us in our frail shelter for the rest of the night, but I need not have feared. Babs had the true hunter's spirit ; she concentrated upon the business in hand and left the consideration of doubts and uncertainties for afterwards. While the lion was in the air I had reloaded ; when he rose on his hind legs I hit him again, behind the shoulder. He rolled over and over into the hollow and was lost to sight. We lay listening for a minute to the sounds of groaning ; then all was still.

We rescued Mick from his uncomfortable situation under the blankets, found the thermos flask, and refreshed ourselves with coffee and tobacco. We did not talk much, we felt half-jubilant, half-ashamed ; like people who have committed a magnificent crime. Once or



CAMP ON THE EUASSO NYIRO

twice we thought we heard groans from the hollow ; I was uneasy in case the lion should be recovering from his wounds and about to take the offensive, but when I reflected upon where those two bullets had struck him and the effect they must have produced, I was convinced that he could not have lived more than a minute or two after he had been shot. It seemed more likely that the groans came from the hyena, who might not have succumbed to his injuries.

After a time the fatigue and excitement of two nights of wakefulness proved too much for us ; we fell asleep and knew nothing of our surroundings until three o'clock. At that hour a terrific roaring broke out in the bush near by ; the lioness was seeking to avenge the death of her mate. She went to and fro in the screen of bush about two hundred yards from the boma, making the hills echo with her enormous, cavernous voice. Our first alarm changed to sympathy for her bereavement. Babs gave it as her opinion that had she possessed a mate like the dead lion she would have carried on much the same way in the circumstances. I began to feel a contemptible character compared with the noble beast I had murdered—this is the disadvantage of the imaginative temperament in the body of a big game hunter ; a slaughterer should be of sterner clay. At the same time, although sympathising with the lioness, I feared her vengeance, and was very glad when at last she went away, roaring, up the hill to her lair. We went to sleep again, but before morning she returned to put in another half-hour of threats and revilings.

In the first grey light of dawn I emerged from the boma to make sure that the lion was dead. The lioness was still roaring about five hundred yards on the slope of the hill, but I was in no immediate danger from her

as long as I could hear her voice and guess at her whereabouts. My feeling of confidence did not extend to the lion. I was by no means certain that he was beyond making a sudden rush at me, and therefore I went very cautiously, on the look out for trouble. I approached the edge of the hollow slowly, scrutinising the tiny bushes and grass clumps with care. A lion can conceal himself in grass a foot high, as I well knew.

In a moment I caught sight of a dim shape in the misty hollow. It did not move, and I straightened up with a sigh of relief. As long as I could see the beast I did not worry ; should it suddenly come to life I could shoot it before it got near me. I approached a couple of paces, and then discovered that it was the corpse of the hyena that I was looking at.

Feeling most upset I stared wildly round. The lion was lying away to my left, about ten paces from me. He looked as big as a donkey, lying there on his side ; his legs stretched out like posts, his tawny eyes glazed in death. With intense relief I recognised that I had nothing to fear from him. You see, he was a better man than me even in death ; the bare look of him was enough to make my puny limbs tremble ; his great paws and forearms, his massive head and hugely muscled shoulders, were magnificent and terrible in the faint light.

At my call Babs came out of the boma to inspect the trophy. She wept at the sight of him. Upon the hill the lioness still called ; a hopeless melancholy voice rolling through the bush and dying out over the plains in sighing echoes.

I was curious to know the length of the lion's spring after I had shot him. At the time it had seemed to me that but for the fortunate accident of his being turned

away from us, we should have received his bounding body through the top of the boma, on to our heads. My assumption was correct ; I found that he had leapt about thirty-five feet, and I remembered that he had risen at least ten feet in the air. Lions have been known to leap over stockades twelve feet high ; that is how they do it. It did not cheer me to realise that we had escaped death by accident. I had been sure that at that range I could drop a lion with a single shot ; it now appeared that in certain circumstances the lion might kill me before he died, no matter how straightly I shot. It was very disquieting. A hunter does not like to feel there is too much of the element of chance in his trade ; it robs him of confidence, and loss of confidence often means loss of life.

We went back to camp to get the car. When we returned the lioness had stopped calling ; perhaps she recognised the truth, that her mate would never come back to her. We propped up simba's head and photographed him ; then I set about the work of skinning. It was a big job. We had great difficulty in turning the body over, but by using the leverage of the legs we accomplished it. The head was the worst part ; both of us strained and tugged at it without avail. Eventually I levered it up with a pole. It took me a long time to get the skin off. I was hot and tired when it was at last loaded into the car, together with our bedding, and we were able to drive to camp for breakfast.

The lion's body was covered with the thick yellow fat which is much prized by all natives. The Masai rub themselves with it, thereby attaining some of the strength and courage of the lion ; other tribes believe it to be a cure for rheumatism. We left several pounds' worth of fat behind us on the veld, but I was too tired

after two nights in the boma, and the job of skinning, to worry about lion fat. The animal was in excellent condition, his skin was smooth and sound ; the only parasites on it were about a dozen flying ticks. These insects are as large as a blow-fly ; they are extremely difficult to catch and are as hardy as the ordinary blue, wingless tick of the veld-grass, so that it is impossible to kill them by a blow of the hand. When the lion was skinned they transferred their attentions to ourselves and the dog, and we did not enjoy their society. They accompanied us eighty miles on our homeward way, and it was three days before the last of them was caught and killed.

We had not been back in camp long before a Masai herdsman put in his appearance. He exclaimed at sight of the lion-skin. Where was the fat ? he asked. I told him, and he hurried off to get it. Within an hour a procession of Masai elders arrived, old, toothless men in goatskin robes. They gathered round the lion in an admiring circle. Each old man approached the head (which was still in the skin), knocked on it with his knuckles, and solemnly cursed the spirit of its owner. Then they all shook hands with me, smiling broadly. I could not understand more than a few words of their language but I gathered that the lion was well known to them. He had lived in the thicket up on the hill and had been a great stock-lifter.

After breakfast I set to work skinning out the paws and the head and cutting the flesh away from the skull. These are tiresome, fatiguing tasks : the ears, lips and eyes are particularly difficult to skin and the paws are a mass of fatty gristle which will not separate easily from the pads. The Masai sent me a couple of women, who sat down and scraped the fat and tissue from the skin,

cheering themselves with much talk and laughter. By evening I had got things more or less to my liking. I spread the skin thickly with salt, rolled it up, and put it in a sack. The skull, still rather meaty, was tied on the back of the car.

The next morning early we loaded up and trekked : we had no desire to stay another night in that ghostly hollow now that the purpose which had taken us there was accomplished. We drove straight away to the Euasso Nyiro, where we arrived at dusk.

This river must not be confused with the Guasso Nyiro of the first safari ; the two places are hundreds of miles apart, and the two rivers flow through different types of country. The Northern Guasso Nyiro rises in the Aberdares and flows into the Lorian Swamp ; the Southern Euasso Nyiro rises in the Mau and flows into Lake Natron. Of the two the latter is the smaller stream, and, at the point where we crossed it, thirty miles from its source, it is no more than twenty yards broad. Along its banks lie glades—long flat strips of green sward, dotted with patches of shrubbery and decorated with green feathery trees. The trees are fever thorns with brilliant mossy-green stems and light branches armed with inch-long spikes. In these glades live guinea-fowl, dik-dik, impala, wart-hog, lion, leopard and rhinoceros. It is beautiful country ; the cool, radiant evenings are almost perfect. Human criticism is unable to find much to disparage, for there are few flies and practically no ticks.

At a spot well known to us, ten miles upstream from the track, we made camp. Now, my favourite camping spot on this river was a little plateau close to the water, walled in on one side by a steep kopjie. From the plateau a game trail led down a bank to a strip of

emerald-green Kikuyu grass bounded on one side by a waterfall and on the other by a rocky cliff. Beyond this again was a small plain in a curve of the river, and on this plain impala, wart-hog, and guinea-fowl disported themselves of an evening in full view of the camp. For some reason I had never camped on the narrow bench of Kikuyu grass, although it was closer to the waterfall at which I bathed and procured my drinking water. I had never formulated any conscious objection to camping on that soft, lush grass ; I just did not want to ; but when Babs averred that it was an excellent place to erect the tarpaulin and would save us the fatigue of carrying water up on to the plateau I could find no cause to dispute her argument. Accordingly we camped at that spot, and when night closed down we regretted it.

There was a drift a few hundred yards down the river ; at that drift a pack of five lions and an old rhinoceros watered. I had known them for three years, they were always to be found at the same spot and they always took their drink at about the same time. We heard the rhino snorting in the brake across the river as we were having our evening bathe. An hour later we were treated to a chorus of roaring from the big carnivora as they drank at the drift, preparatory to going up to the Loita Plains for the night's hunting.

I suddenly discovered why I had been averse from camping on that Kikuyu grass. The noise of the fall prevented any but loud noises from being heard—it was worse than the wind at Bagdammit. The narrow trail along the river bank was just the one the rhino would choose if he came that way and, with the rocks on one side and the river on the other, there would be no chance of avoiding him. It was too late to alter things,

we made ourselves content with matters as they were and hoped for the best. But I was not easy in my mind, for I had unpleasant memories of those lions and of that rhino.

A couple of years before I had hunted with a friend in that district. We camped on the plateau. One evening I took a .22 rifle and went out to shoot guinea-fowl. I wandered up into the glades behind the kopjie and there I fell foul of the rhino. My first intimation of his presence was a violent snort and a sound as of a barrel rolling down a hill. This is caused by the animal grunting and trotting at the same time ; it is a peculiarly unpleasant sound to hear. The rhino had got my wind and was trotting in a half-circle through the bush behind me.

I had once hunted him with every intention of shooting him ; I had reason to believe he had a grudge against me. In those days I had named him Kelly, because he was so elusive ; now, because I did not want him and had nothing but a pop-gun in my hand, he was bent on making my closer acquaintance.

I lay flat beneath a bush until his grunting ceased and then tried to slink back to camp by a circuitous route. Whichever way I went, I ran into Kelly. He was making circles round me and, as luck would have it, at whatever part of their diameter he paused to conceal himself and listen I made my appearance before long and started him off again. From first to last we did not see each other. It was an affair of guess-work ; he deduced my approximate whereabouts by his power of smell, I placed him fairly accurately by the noise he made whenever he tried to find me. The question is, was he hunting me, or was he under the impression that I was hunting him ? I have never been able to decide

that point; all I know is that for over an hour I played tag with that rhino through the glades and by the end of that time I was in a highly nervous condition and beginning to think I should be there all night. At last, in approaching a thick patch of bush, I heard him give his usual snort and dash off at right angles. I slipped at a venture through a leafy tunnel and came out into another glade, and as I hurried across it I heard Kelly rumbling off in the other direction.

I lost no time in making for camp, but I was to have another scare before I reached it. My way led along the river bank past the big drift, and as I drew level with it I heard the grunting of lions down by the water. The bank of the drift was long and steep, a broad game trail led from it. If I could approach the top of the bank undetected I should see the lions drinking, thirty feet below me.

It was almost dark, the moon was rising over the bush-clad hills, there was just enough light to make my plan practicable. Foot by foot I stole nearer to the edge of the bank, listening to those grunting voices below. Another step and I should have been able to see over the top, down into the hollow, but I never took that step.

Suddenly a terrific roar broke out down at the water; I heard the rush of a beast ascending the game trail towards me. Without a backward glance I ran for the camp, expecting every instant to feel a huge weight leap upon me from behind and bear me down. I find it a very bad thing to turn one's back upon danger. When I ran from those lions I had all the feelings of a hunted buck, I was panic-stricken. Only once have I run so fast; when I fancied myself pursued by a bull elephant and was unarmed, as now. On that occasion

the elephant did not follow me, and on this occasion the lion did not. A hundred yards from camp I pulled myself together, paused to regain my breath and light a cigarette, and finally made my appearance before my friend and the boys with perfect composure.

These two experiences convinced me that the Euasso Nyiro animals were not to be trifled with, and contributed to my distaste for our camping site, where any of them could come upon us unheard. But nothing happened to disturb us as we cooked our buck steaks and spread our blankets, while the spur-fowl and guinea-fowl shouted the news from every thicket that they were preparing for a comfortable night's rest.

I know of no form of concentration more fatiguing than driving a heavily-loaded car over roads which were never intended for more speedy vehicles than ox-waggons. One has to watch the track with lynx eyes ; every few yards there is a rock or bush stump to be avoided, and frequently one comes upon drifts and dongas where the descents are likely to be very steep and canted at a dangerous angle. Often in the bottoms of these dry river-beds the front wheels are rising up the further bank while the back wheels are still descending. The car must be eased down cautiously into the rocky depression and suddenly accelerated at the last moment in order to pull out of it without stalling the engine. At such moments the groaning chassis may be strained in two opposite directions at the same time ; the car lurches to one side, almost standing on its bonnet, and sways violently to the other side with the radiator-cap pointing at the sky. There is always great risk of turning over, and even greater risk of running backwards into the jumble of rocks and bushes from which one has just emerged. Added to these trials are the

difficult stretches of sand and dust where wheels will not grip and steering is useless and, if it is raining, troubles become magnified a thousandfold. After a day's journey of this kind one's nervous system needs the refreshment of sound sleep. On safari it does not always get it.

This night we slept soundly for a few hours, then Babs woke me with the news that there were ants about. I switched on the torch. Across the grass two streams of siafu were approaching ; the grass roots were alive with the skirmishers of the main armies. We grabbed the lantern and as many blankets as we could carry and dived out into the night, collecting a number of ants on our legs as we trod the soft grass round about the tarpaulin. The little rocky plateau was the only safe place ; we reached it, spread our blankets, and lay down again, leaving the lantern burning dimly between us.

Away from the waterfall the sounds of the night were audible. The lions were hunting up on the plains, uttering their short coughing roars with which they drive the game ; frogs and cicadas were singing their monotonous songs along the river bank. The moon was obscured by clouds, there was little light, and every prospect of rain in the near future.

Feeling very bad-tempered and pessimistic I composed myself to sleep again, despite the uneven ground which seemed all rocks and sticks under my body. An hour before dawn Babs woke me again. The lantern had burned low—the oil was running out—the night was dark and cold. All about us in the bush lions were grunting. I sat up in my blankets, rifle ready ; Babs held the torch, and we waited for what would happen. All five lions were promenading round us ; they foared and grunted continuously. We could distinguish one

big fellow with a mighty voice, evidently the pack leader. What they intended to do I could not guess ; they were acting in a strange fashion considering we had no transport animals, and Mick would not have appealed to them as worth the trouble of attacking a camp. One can never be sure of anything where wild animals are concerned ; there might be considerable danger in this situation for all I could tell.

We sat silently waiting for something to happen while the night grew colder and the chilly dawn wind began to whistle over the veld. At the end of half an hour the position had not altered ; we sat shivering with nerves at strain, waiting to be attacked ; the lions prowled through the bush, roaring dismally. Finally we came to the conclusion that ants were preferable to lions ; we contemplated climbing into the car, which was full of luggage, and sitting there till morning. When we returned to the camp it was to find that the ants had vanished. They had passed through and over all our belongings, and finding nothing worthy of their attention had gone on about their business. We were intensely relieved to lie down in the shelter of the tarpaulin ; not that it would have been much protection against lions, but because it is infinitely preferable to be surrounded by familiar, comforting objects than to lie out like a buck on the veld when the enemy is on the prowl, frightening the night with his terrible voice.

The following day we shifted camp further along the river to a spot where silence reigned and there was no thick grass to encourage ants. We spent a lazy day bathing and washing clothes, and in the evening rambled through the glades in pursuit of guinea-fowl for the larder. As the shadows were clustering against the bushes, I was standing by the tailboard of the car cleaning

my rifle which I had taken to pieces ; Babs was cooking at the fire. From a screen of bush about thirty yards away came the grunting of a leopard, which sounds exactly like someone sawing through a tough piece of wood. He was after the dog. I hastily assembled the rifle, loaded it, and went out to interview the unwelcome visitor.

It was nearly dark and I could see little as I pushed cautiously through the bush with Mick at my heels. The grunting of the leopard receded before me, always through the thickest cover, until finally I reached the river bank and heard the beast on the further side, going off downstream. He did not return to worry us that night, but I was not satisfied that he had given up hope of stealing our friend and servant. I determined to worry him before he worried us.

The next morning I chose an open glade in which was a lonely tree, and a clump of thick bush thirty yards from it. I cut out the centre of a bush, making a chamber sufficiently large to hold two people. With grass and creepers I masked the hiding-place so that no vestige of starlight could penetrate into it, then I tied the carcass of a gazelle in the branches of the tree, and returned to camp for tea.

Our plan was to sit in the bush and wait for the leopard to climb the tree to get at the meat. When we heard him doing this we would shine the torch upon him and shoot him. It sounded quite easy, but we had not reckoned on the cunning of *felis pardus* who can give points in hunting to any beast in Africa.

At dusk we took up our position in the bush. It was a quiet night ; for hours nothing came near us ; even the hyenas made no attempt to get the meat which, though beyond their reach, might have been expected

to attract them. We could hear them wailing away up near a Masai manyatta, a mile beyond the river, and there was also a lion up there ; the big fellow who had scared us a couple of nights previously. The rest of the pack were up on the veld in the opposite direction. Why they had separated I do not know.

About midnight we heard the grunting of a leopard down by the river behind us. We sat mute, filled with expectancy. He circled round our bush and round the tree which held the meat, subjecting it to a thorough examination, but he would not climb it. Presently we heard more grunting ; the gentleman had a mate, who also prospected around the kill and also came to the conclusion that there was something wrong with it. They prowled round for half an hour, and then more grunting came from the river-bed, and this time it sounded like the voice of a rhinoceros. Babs did not share my opinion ; she thought it was the she-leopard again. I listened intently and heard the unmistakable sawing noise—evidently Babs was right.

There ensued a period of silence and then came a rending, tearing sound from the bush above our heads. It was a rhino, and out of all the succulent green-stuff in the vicinity he had chosen that which sheltered us off which to browse ! He took another mouthful, chewed it up and gave a sigh of pleasure at its excellent flavour. With great distinctness we smelt the sharp odour of crushed vegetation.

I had never been in such a predicament in my life ; for a moment I did not know what to do. I have plenty of theories about the mentality of the rhino. I believe him to be a misanthropic, stupid animal, acutely conscious of his defective vision and general helplessness in moments of danger. Like every other animal he

will always rather run than fight, but he must be aware of his enormous bulk which makes it impossible for him to escape unseen when the enemy is close to him. He is also aware of his strength. Putting myself in the beast's place, I should endeavour to avoid man, but if man discovered his presence within a few yards of me, I should take the offensive, trusting to my great strength and the element of surprise to overthrow him and extricate myself from a dangerous situation.

In dealing with rhino I have always acted on the assumption that this is how they think, and, as I am still alive, I believe that my assumption is right. Of course these generalisations are subject to the contradictions of individual peculiarities ; animals are not robots, they have characters and diverse inclinations just as we have.

I knew this old rhino well. He was a big, morose beast, who desired to be left alone, but would not brook any interference with his liberty. I have described how on one occasion he had tried to catch me in the bush ; evidently he was not to be trifled with. What would be the mental processes of such a beast if, while feeding off a bush, he discovered man to be within a few feet of him ? He would be likely to attack and trample the enemy to pieces. But if the information of lurking danger were conveyed to him gradually by means to which he was accustomed, what then ? He would almost certainly steal off quietly and lose himself in the bush.

The only expedient I could think of to produce this effect was to laugh. There is something in the sound of quiet human laughter exceedingly disconcerting to animals. I think a laugh more disturbingly threatening than a shout. I emitted a smothered chuckle, which reached the rhino's ears. He gave a snort and stopped

feeding ; he was almost certain he had heard a man, but he did not know from where the sound had come.

So far, good ! He was all prepared to sneak away, but it was important that he should go in the right direction. I did not want him to get down wind from us and smell us out, for one could not tell what such a beast would do if he thought himself pursued. I lighted a cigarette inside the shelter of my coat and puffed smoke up through the twigs above us. He caught a whiff of it and it decided him ; there were men close by who were not aware of his presence ; his best plan was to beat a cautious retreat. He could not resist snorting as he turned away. Why is it that the rhino always snorts even when he wishes to remain undetected ?

We heard his faint footfalls receding ; he seemed to us to be going on tiptoe, so soft was the fall of his great feet on the hard ground.

When he had departed we crawled out of the bush into the starlit night. It seemed very pleasant to be in the open again where one could see big objects at twenty paces distance. We had had more than enough of that bush ; we went back to camp to bed, willing to admit that the leopards had outwitted us. The following morning we struck camp and commenced our journey back to Nairobi, satisfied with our holiday and its results.

CHAPTER V

SAFARI N'NE

IN December, 1927, I made plans to shoot two big elephants. At that time elephant licences were not expensive: the first beast cost fifteen pounds, the second twenty-five pounds. These fees were in addition to the resident's yearly licence, costing ten pounds. Supposing it took me a month to get two elephants and that my expenses were twenty pounds in addition to the cost of the licence, and supposing the elephants carried 320 lbs. of ivory between them, at the current price of twenty-three shillings per pound there should be a handsome profit on the transaction.

I selected the Wakamba country for my hunting-ground and Masongoleni for my headquarters: in the scrub-bush and sandy dongas of the Kitui district live the biggest tuskers to be found in East Africa to-day, but these elephants know they are in demand and have become so savage that they attack man on sight. William Judd was killed by one of these beasts in November, 1927, while I was dallying with the thought of shooting in that district.

Judd had killed over a hundred and fifty elephants; he was one of the foremost hunters of Africa. He and his son came upon the spoor of a solitary bull elephant in the evening, just as they were about to camp. They followed the spoor, but when, after several miles of trekking, they had not come up with the beast, Judd decided

to abandon the hunt for that night. At the moment he announced this decision to his son they heard the elephant moving in the bush close at hand.

Now, who shall say that the hunter's luck did not forsake Bill Judd at that moment? He stole through a screen of bush into a little clearing and there was the quarry, a big elephant with big tusks. Judd fired both barrels; the elephant charged. The hunter stepped aside to reload and to allow his son to take a turn, but the son could not stop the beast. The elephant pushed the younger man aside so that he fell headlong, dashed upon the father and, seizing him with its trunk, pulled him on to its tusk. Having killed him by this horrible means it took his body by the heels and threshed it against the trees. Young Judd was shooting at the beast while it did this, and after a time it succumbed to its wounds and fell dead.

Now, mark the actions of this elephant: it actually pushed one man aside to get at another, and having caught the object of its wrath it made ferociously sure of its vengeance: it paid no attention to the man who was shooting .350 magnum bullets into it at close range!

Judd senior was using a .465 Holland and Holland double ejector express, one of the finest rifles procurable. A skilled hunter can fire four shots from a double as fast as another man can fire five shots from a magazine: I have often tested this and found it correct. What can have happened to this experienced hunter that he was unable to reload in time to prevent the elephant getting at him? I repeat that the hunter's luck forsook Bill Judd that day!

The adventurer is never deterred by the fate of his predecessors; he is a believer in luck and his own

immunity from mishap, providing the fickle goddess continues to smile upon him. Judd's fate did not disdisclose me to follow in his footsteps ; I was confident that I should get big ivory in the Kitui and Masongoleni districts. Unfortunately my plans were brought to naught by the Government. In early December I heard the first rumour that elephant licences were to be increased to a figure which would make ivory hunting an un lucrative employment. Similar rumours had circulated for years past. I paid little attention to this one, but by Christmas I received inside information which left no room for doubt : the new fifty-pound tax would come into force on the first day of the new year.

My Kenya plans were frustrated, but there yet remained as fields for enterprise the territories of Tanganyika, Uganda, the Congo, and Portuguese East Africa. I knew Tanganyika well although I had not visited that country since its occupation by the British. I knew that the licences there were cheap and elephants plentiful, though poorer in ivory than their Kenya cousins. No rumours of impending changes in the game ordinances had reached me from the South : I wrote a letter to the Game Warden at Kilosa, asking if I should be allowed free access to the mandated territory to hunt elephants. The reply informed me there would be no obstacle to my entering Tanganyika as long as Customs formalities were complied with, and that all particulars of game licences would be given me at Arusha when I arrived there. This ambiguity was perplexing, but all my arrangements were made to start immediately and I could not tarry for further enquiries.

On the third day of the year I loaded my old Ford car as full as she would hold and pointed her nose for

Nairobi and the road to the border. My sole companion was a Kikuyu man-of-all-work called Juma. He was a slim, angular native, about thirty years old, with the grave, concerned demeanour peculiar to his tribe. There is nothing of light-hearted jollity about the Wakikuyu ; to them life is a serious business ; there is more occasion in it for sympathy than congratulation, so that they do not wear a hail-fellow-well-met comportment. This man was an efficient servant and an uncomplaining companion, despite the strain to which his adroitness was subjected during that unfortunate trip. He cooked moderately well, and by the time I had cursed him soundly in exasperation at his clumsiness with the transport work he had learned the lesson that makes an indifferent servant into a passable one, and a passable one into a good one : that his master is not to be trifled with.

There are some trips that start badly ; in my experience they always continue badly. It is as though fate were warning one that a bad streak had set in. The wise man takes the warning and postpones his undertaking until the hoodoo has worked itself out ; the headstrong man disregards these signs and portents, sufficient to have confounded Cæsar himself, and steers rashly into a sea of troubles in which, even if he is not overwhelmed, he is likely to be bruised and battered.

Such things had happened to me before, but I had never learnt to avoid them ; I still threw myself blindly and arrogantly against forces I did not understand and tried by own unaided efforts to bend unpropitious fate to my will. I had been oppressed by the fear that I should be killed by an elephant, but I had determined to hunt elephants. The licence had been raised in Kenya, thereby blocking my efforts in that direction ; I was to

find, when I reached Arusha, that the licence had been raised in Tanganyika also, but lest these happenings should not be sufficient deterrent I was subjected to all the soul-destroying toil and disappointment of a really unlucky safari.

My old car was fitted with new tyres : in the first sixty miles I had seven punctures ! Since my wheels were not detachable, these punctures had to be mended by the roadside in the fiery heat of the shadeless plains. Lizzie developed carburettor trouble and I had to remove this instrument five times. Finally, a valve spring broke, forcing me to take refuge from the horrors of the road at a hotel near Limuru.

The next morning I put in a new valve spring—jamming my thumb badly in the act—and crawled jerkily into Nairobi, with sooty plugs, and erratic ignition beyond my power to diagnose. On enquiry at the passport office I was told that my passport had expired and that I must find a lawyer or magistrate to swear to my identity before I could be furnished with a new one. In those days I knew very few people in Nairobi ; I walked all over the town before I found a solicitor who would vouch for me.

In the afternoon I got away from the town, urging Lizzie up the Ngong Road and out over the rough track that led to Longido and the Frontier. For a few miles this track runs through hilly country, where there are patches of bush ; then it passes a cairn of stones and a notice-board which marks the boundary of the game reserve, and from then onwards it winds over the veld like a dirty brown ribbon strewn across a jumble of khaki cushions.

The veld is a succession of long, swelling hills, devoid of tree or bush, for the tiny whistling thorns

that line the dry water-courses cannot be counted shade or cover. It would seem that these thorns, which in other places enjoy a growth of from ten to fourteen feet, are here dwarfed by the keen winds of October sweeping across the boundless veld under leaden, cloudy skies. At high altitudes the absence of sunshine for a single day is bitterly felt, but when the sky is overcast for weeks on end the cheerless cold of outer space seems to have stolen into the world. All this country we now traversed had been familiar to me during the war ; I had spent a "short rains" at Kajiado and had no surprise at lack of trees and shrubs on the, at present, sunny plains.

The game is more hardy than the thorns : there are hartebeeste, zebra, ostrich, tommy, and granti in enormous numbers in that part of the game reserve and at no season of the year do they forsake it. As one drives along the rough track, which is nothing but two wheel-ruts divided by a thick ridge of grass, the leisurely beasts stand to stare at the car, and within a few miles there may be fifty thousand of them. There I have seen a herd of zebra ten thousand strong, stampeding out of the morning mist and streaming past, with thundering hoofs and flying tails, like a magnificent charge of cavalry. That was the largest zebra herd I ever saw ; I doubt if it can be matched on the plains now, since Germany discovered how to make patent leather out of zebra-hide and Dutchmen discovered that they could earn eleven shillings by the death of each zebra.

The slaughter began on the Ushingishu Plateau. There were forty thousand zebra on the farms, and the Maize Growers' Association did not like supporting them ; but they had no choice, for in 1924 zebra-hides were of no commercial value : they could not be tanned

for leather ; no one would buy them and, therefore, no one could be persuaded to collect them. Then a market was found : Dutchmen were armed with Portuguese Mausers and cheap ammunition. The zebras' troubles began.

In a very short time zebra were a rarity on the Plateau ; then the hunters turned their attention to other districts.

Their method was to go out with waggons and motor-trucks ; they pursued the wretched animals over the veld, shooting blindly into the "brown." They used solid ammunition so that a bullet fired into the haunch of a flying animal would penetrate the length of its body ; they finished off the wounded by strokes of a seven-pound hammer delivered on the skull between the eyes.

Zebra wander ; like the eland they trek far and wide across the country in search of good grazing, and like the eland they fell an easy prey to the slaughterers who waited for them along the boundaries of the game reserves. In a few years big herds of zebra were hard to find, even in protected areas.

The zebra is the lion's principle means of sustenance. When his favourite food became scarce he turned his attention to stock thieving. Permission was granted to settlers to poison lions on their holdings. The carcasses of oxen and buck were doctored with strychnine, and lions, servals, genets, hyenas and vultures were destroyed indiscriminately. One man poisoned sixteen lions in one night !

A poisoned skin is useless : it cannot be dressed ; but visitors did not know this and soon a brisk trade in poisoned skins sprang up in the towns. The zebra hunters were not slow to take advantage of these markets. It was easy to dodge into the reserves, leave poisoned

baits, and collect the lions that were to be found dead in the mornings close to the treacherous feasts prepared for them : it was easy to conceal the skins among the zebra hides and to market them in the towns as the lawful products of the hunter's skill or the farmer's vengeance.

These industries are responsible for the diminution of the once plentiful zebra herds, and the lions that preyed upon them, along the road to Longido, but the kongoni (*hartebeeste*) still survive in their thousands, and as long as man is not allowed to pack them in cold storage and export them to the cities of Europe and America they will flourish, for one cannot make patent leather out of their hides.

I had a bad puncture before I reached Kajiado, and more carburettor trouble ; the hoodoo was still active. While I tinkered with repairs, Mick, the terrier, amused himself by chasing kongoni.

They are strange-looking animals with a slouching, dejected air as though life were a sorry business for them, and, what with periodical droughts, onslaughts from men and lions, and multitudes of parasites, their existence may well seem to them a bitter waste of opportunity. But when chased by dogs they afford the only example known to me of an animal exulting in its pursuit. There is no doubt they like being chased by dogs. They start away at their long easy canter, taking it very leisurely, until the excitable canine is close on their heels ; then they bunch their feet and proceed in those miraculous, stiff-legged hops demonstrated by all the veld buck, in which they cover twelve feet at a bound as though fitted with springs in their hoofs. The dogs, toiling through the rough grass in rear of the bouncing quarry, become disheartened, but the kongoni slows up to encourage them and, if they show signs of

abandoning the chase, will stop and regard them tantalizingly until they regain their enthusiasm.

It is apparent that the kongoni's playfulness is the result of well-understood immunity ; for what creature, other than man, will risk torment and death for excitement's sake ?

Pursue the kongoni in a car and you will see just how he can lie down to it and push the veld away from under his nimble hoofs. The speedometer will register forty miles an hour before the kongoni becomes really anxious to do his best.

Mick obtained exercise and amusement while I laboured ; the buck ran in circles round the car, so that when I was ready to move again the dog did not delay me. Once perched on the top of the load, tongue protruding, flanks heaving, with one bright eye fixed upon the wild things we passed, the old fellow knew he must stay there while we were in motion. He had an unfortunate habit of sitting on one haunch to scratch just as we were approaching dangerous corners and dongas, and when I applied the brakes he would land on the back of my neck, to claw and struggle in a futile effort to regain his balance while I negotiated the difficult passage. It is not easy to drive over broken ground with fifty pounds of agitated dog on one's shoulders.

In the pale evening light we reached Kajiado—just a few wooden bungalows and a railway station—and sped through it, *en route* for Bicel.

Every yard of the twenty miles between the two places produced memories the reverse of pleasant. In 1915 my regiment had occupied Kajiado while the East African Mounted Rifles lay at Bicel. It was our duty to furnish escorts for the convoys going to the advanced post. At three o'clock in the bitter frosty mornings we paraded,

clad in shorts and khaki shirts : shivers and curses silenced by strictly enforced command. There must be no smoking, no talking ; but a string of twenty waggons, each with its screaming, whip-cracking driver and its shika-kamba equipped with a lantern informed everyone within five miles that a convoy was on the road.

The two-mile-an-hour trudge in a cloud of choking dust, through the night chill and the day heat, impressed that road firmly on the memory. Sometimes enemy raiding parties attacked the convoy, causing excitement, but mostly it was just trudge : cold, heat, thirst, weariness, and monotony.

But even at such times beauty leaves its imprint on the mind. I remember the quick dawns, with kongoni sentinels silhouetted against the lambent sky ; the breeze dancing across the miles of feathery brown grasses ; and Kilimanjaro, remote and splendid on the horizon. It is the highest mountain in Africa : twenty thousand feet. The top is a huge dome of snow out of which stick little peaks. In the early morning one may see the horizon through the base of the mountain ; Kilimanjaro is perched on the clouds, unconnected with the prosaic earth : a dream, a fantasy, a Christian heaven ; or a pagan Olympus. But to the natives it is merely a mountain covered with white dust.

Cruising through the hushed evening, down into thorny dongas, and up over windy hills, I looked eagerly for my old night-capped friend, but the horizon was hung with a drapery of white trade-wind cloud and I had no view of Kilimanjaro that day. We camped by the Bicel River. The night was warm and sticky ; the river, attenuated by drought and fouled by cattle, smelt vilely and looked worse. There was a drum of

clear water on the car and I did not drink of the polluted stream where Masai herds congregated in thousands every day to stand knee-deep in the pools while their guardians stood on one leg, leaning on their spears, whistling dolefully to their charges.

Everything atrophies for lack of use : the native mind is no exception, and it gets little exercise. The cow, chewing the cud under the fever thorn, and the herdsman watching her, are scarcely dissimilar in mental activity. Each fulfils Nature's primal requirements : to live, and to beget life throughout a million years. What stupidity ! But cheer up ! the motor-bus and the cinema are spreading over the Continent like ripples upon the placid pool of content—a new element to make living and begetting less easy and more exciting.

On the following day we passed Kidongai and Manga, and reached Longido, the Frontier Post. As I passed the hill of Manga I remembered that at this place a few years ago great deeds were done. The lions had become so numerous and destructive that something had to be done about it. Since the Masai rising, shortly before, the natives had been deprived of their war spears : they had no means of defending themselves against the wild beasts who attacked their cattle and (since no Masai will watch his stock killed without making an effort to prevent it, and no lion likes to be disturbed at his dinner) frequently mauled the herdsmen.

The Government employed Mr. J. A. Hunter to decimate the lions and teach them to respect humanity. He was provided with Masai, suitably armed and with dogs ; in a month or two he killed ninety-eight lions round about Manga. There are not many men who could have carried out this execution with neatness and despatch, and the strange thing is that if you met J. A. Hunter

you would not suppose he had ever shot anything bigger than a rabbit, and I doubt if he would enlighten your ignorance. Indomitable spirits often inhabit unassuming bodies : most experienced African hunters would attract little attention in a gathering of pheasant-shooters or fox-hunters.

Seven miles from Longido, opposite the Elephant's Skull of many memories, a loud report announced the bursting of a tyre. The tube was blown to shreds and the cover badly torn so that I was obliged to fit a new one. This is the sort of thing that knocks the profit out of hunting.

At Longido a wooden bar across the track restrained my progress until I had declared all dutiable possessions to the Indian clerk in charge of the Customs Office. My protestation that I was returning that way again in a few weeks' time had no effect ; I was obliged to write down upon two sets of forms the description and value of my camp equipment, provisions, arms, and ammunition. Duty on this would be charged by Tanganyika against Kenya and when I returned over the border rebate would be allowed on all I took back. The Government of Tanganyika would not permit Kenya comestibles to be consumed upon her soil without Kenya handing over those fiscal dues she had already received when the produce first entered Africa.

I wondered how many Indian and African clerks were kept busy in Dar-es-Salaam and Nairobi with this folly, and how many Europeans took their six months' leave every three years at the taxpayers' expense to recuperate themselves for the onerous task of supervising the solving of puzzles in an " exacting climate." It is only governments that can afford to spend a pound to earn sixpence.

Arusha is forty-five miles from Longido, and if there exists a more unpleasant car journey I have yet to hear of it. The country is volcanic, covered with straggling thorn bush. The track runs in loose cotton-soil, under which the rocks are hidden like "corduroy" in mud. One's pace is restricted to ten miles an hour on the smoother stretches and to a mere crawl where the bumps are really bad. The wind blusters over the veld : the slate-coloured dust rises in dense clouds : there is always a following wind, and one has to stop frequently to allow the air to clear sufficiently to distinguish the road.

They told me in Arusha that it was impossible to improve this road (the sole means of communication between Nairobi and this part of Tanganyika) because of the moles. I had not known that it was mole tunnels I kept falling into with spine-jarring crashes ; they had seemed like ant-bear holes to me. There was no water along the route ; Lizzie boiled and fumed as she climbed up over the shoulder of Meru Mountain, shaving the sides of cliffs and the edges of precipices, until I wondered which would be the most likely accident : to run out a big end, or to slip back into a donga and wreck the bus beyond hope of repair.

It was fine and breezy up on the high-veld with the steep green mountain rearing its misty summit on the one hand, and the enormous range of buck pasture swinging away into obscurity on the other, but the vibration and the dust had dulled my æsthetic sense and I longed to get off that volcanic soil—and to get it off me, with soap and hot water.

At dusk we reached the river Ngare Nairobi, eight miles from Arusha, and being unable to face that eight miles in the dark we made camp. In the moonlight I

bathed in the cold waters of the rushing stream. At one time I had looked out from the hill of Longido over the burning desert and watched for signs of an enemy patrol approaching from the German camp on the Ngare Nairobi, and in those days the river had been no more than a name to me—a mysterious, unreal name, connected with people who seemed less human than the buck which grazed upon the broad plains about me.

There is not merely national estrangement in warfare, but a complete antipathy ; so that in 1915 a German, to me, was less understandable than a Martian. I could imagine myself a lion in a den of lions : I could not imagine myself a German in the Ngare Nairobi camp, any more than I could imagine myself a disembodied spirit ; for to the soldier the enemy is an intangible creature like the figment of a dream, until you see him and shoot at him ; and even then it all seems unreal that little mannikins should be so enthusiastic to kill you—as though all your friends and the bright world you live in *could* be obliterated.

These somewhat chaotic thoughts are typical of the soldier's thoughts in war-time, and I recaptured them upon that unhallowed spot. It is all very difficult to believe : books and plays are far more real. There were no evidences of the lean, grave-faced asikari and their Martian masters on the Ngare Nairobi when I bathed in it and I found it quite easy to suppose that they were as insubstantial as the romantic hosts of Arthur, even though they had blotted life out of certain people I had known well and had helped to bury. The river told no stories ; in any case the water I bathed in was not the same flood that had filled the water-bottles of that legendary force which crossed the desert to fight at Longido. War is a romantic adventure in theory ; I

should not think it was ever romantic in practice—not since the enforcement of military discipline anyway.

The next morning I reached Arusha and took up my quarters with the Veterinary Officer, for whom I had a letter. I was kindly entertained, but proved a glum guest, I fear, for I now discovered that licences had been raised in Tanganyika so that it would cost me a hundred pounds to shoot an elephant. I looked like being badly out of pocket on the trip ! After some discussion I decided to take out a visitor's temporary licence at a cost of ten pounds and to shoot a rhinoceros, which I hoped would recompense me.

Mbugwe, eighty miles away, was selected as the theatre for this operation. That evening several Government people came in : the drinks were many and mixed—too mixed for my accustomed sobriety. I retired to my tent in the garden, caring little if it snowed before morning. It did not snow, but there occurred the worst earthquake within East African settlers' memories. I slept on the ground, and when I first lay down it seemed that the earth was heaving gently although at that moment there was no earthquake. It is no wonder that when it heaved in truth I had no knowledge of it. In the morning I was confronted with the evidence of cracked pillars and fallen walls : I was dumbfounded. Later, I heard many stories of the panic that earthquake caused in Kenya, where people's houses collapsed upon them, and I was confirmed in the opinion I had long held : that the best bed is the ground, and the best shelter a double thickness of canvas supported upon a ridge pole that would not cause much damage if it fell on one.

The next day we packed up and departed, leaving Mick in hospitable hands, for I would not take him into

the district I was bound for ; the snows of Kenia he could withstand but the tetse fly would soon make an end of him. Lizzie had broken a back spring ; several leaves were cracked and she listed badly, but I had no time for repairs, so we chugged out of Arusha with a mudguard scraping a back tyre.

The road to Mbugwe goes down mostly, but when it meets a kopjie it does not turn aside for water-courses and boulders. The altitude grew less and the weather grew warmer. There were numerous guinea-fowl and sand-grouse in the bush and I was able to replenish the commissariat. I saw a large herd of eland and many giraffe, as well as the commoner creatures which abound in the wilderness. At dusk I entered upon a flat plain covered with coarse, yellow grass, and saw, like a wall across my way, the further escarpment of the Rift Valley.

Along this part of the Rift are distributed those soda-impregnated lakes of which Natron and Manyara are typical examples.

Manyara was my objective ; it stretched away to my right, a long expanse of shining water, with great herds of wilderbeeste grazing along its banks. The land here is remarkable ; it is a huge pan of dried mud, sparsely covered with grass. The grass stems are inches apart, thick, and reedy. The Mbugwe tribe had reclaimed it from the waters by driving ditches in all directions. On the soil thus drained they grow their scanty crops and pasture their emaciated flocks and herds ; and they build little oblong huts of reeds and mud, with flat roofs on which the grass grows luxuriantly from the sods that thatch them. The huts are no more than shoulder high, hardly big enough for fowl houses.

Man elects to live where he is immune from war and

famine ; all other evils are less than these two. Presumably the Mbugwe found that they could grow corn and roots in this place and that their more powerful neighbours did not envy them their possession of it, so they put up with the heat, the mud, and the mosquitoes. You will understand that war and famine must be pretty terrible when I tell you about the mosquitoes, which the Mbugwe considered a lesser evil. Their fields and pastures become swamps during the rains ; it is impossible to turn a wheel on that ground when it is wet. The road is built up on an embankment, like a railway line—that helps, but not sufficiently. Lizzie yawned and swung across that cambered surface, for the rainy season was not quite over and occasionally showers broke against the wall of the Rift, besprinkling the surrounding country.

We got into Mbugwe without skidding off the road into the dyke, which seemed to indicate that the hoodoo was wearing thin, or was giving us a temporary respite. The village contained many native huts and a few mud-built Indian dukas. The Asiatics traded with the agriculturists, taking and bringing goods in ramshackle lorries over that bad road to Arusha. It was wonderful how they did it. There is very little method about an Indian lorry driver. In his hands machinery degenerates alarmingly ; he neglects the simplest precautions and is as careless with energy as he is careful with money. Half a dozen Indians taking one truck over a bad road is a stupendous achievement, like the historical treks of the Mormons and the Voortrekkers.

At Mbugwe was a rest-camp ! three or four huts of mud and thatch in a compound surrounded by a wattle fence. The surface of the compound was of earth, wetted, tramped, and sun-baked ; not a weed nor an ant could pass unnoticed on that glaring expanse. I

found the man in charge : an old Swahili, loquacious, and helpful. There was a trifle to pay for wood and water ; we were soon supplied with these necessities by native women.

Juma got to work in the kitchen while I spread my blankets in one of the huts and fixed the mosquito-net by strings attached to the rafters. A big moon rose while I was waiting for my dinner ; I sat out in the grass watching it, smoking furiously to keep off the mosquitoes, already busy about their nocturnal activities. During dinner I felt tempted to take refuge under my net, for the lamp attracted them and they made eating a difficult and painful affair, but I was tired and hungry and I did not give them much time to feast on me. When I got into bed they buzzed outside the net in ever-thickening clouds : the noise of them was like the noise of a beehive, and in the moonlight I could see a shifting, smoky cloud through the mesh.

It was stuffy and quiet ; there was no breeze whatever, and the doleful chanting of natives down in the village irritated me. Natives require very little sleep ; they seldom retire before midnight and are up again at five, and on any festive occasions they stay up nearly all night. Festive occasions occur about three times a week in most villages. But what the African loses in length of repose he makes up for in soundness ; he is the world's champion sleeper in this respect. Several hearty kicks are necessary to rouse a sleeping boy ; one kick has no effect whatever.

In one mess, we suspected that our whisky was being stolen. We told an asikari to sleep on a stretcher in front of the cupboard door. At one o'clock in the morning several people wanted a drink ; they entered the mess-room, talking and laughing, moved the asikari's

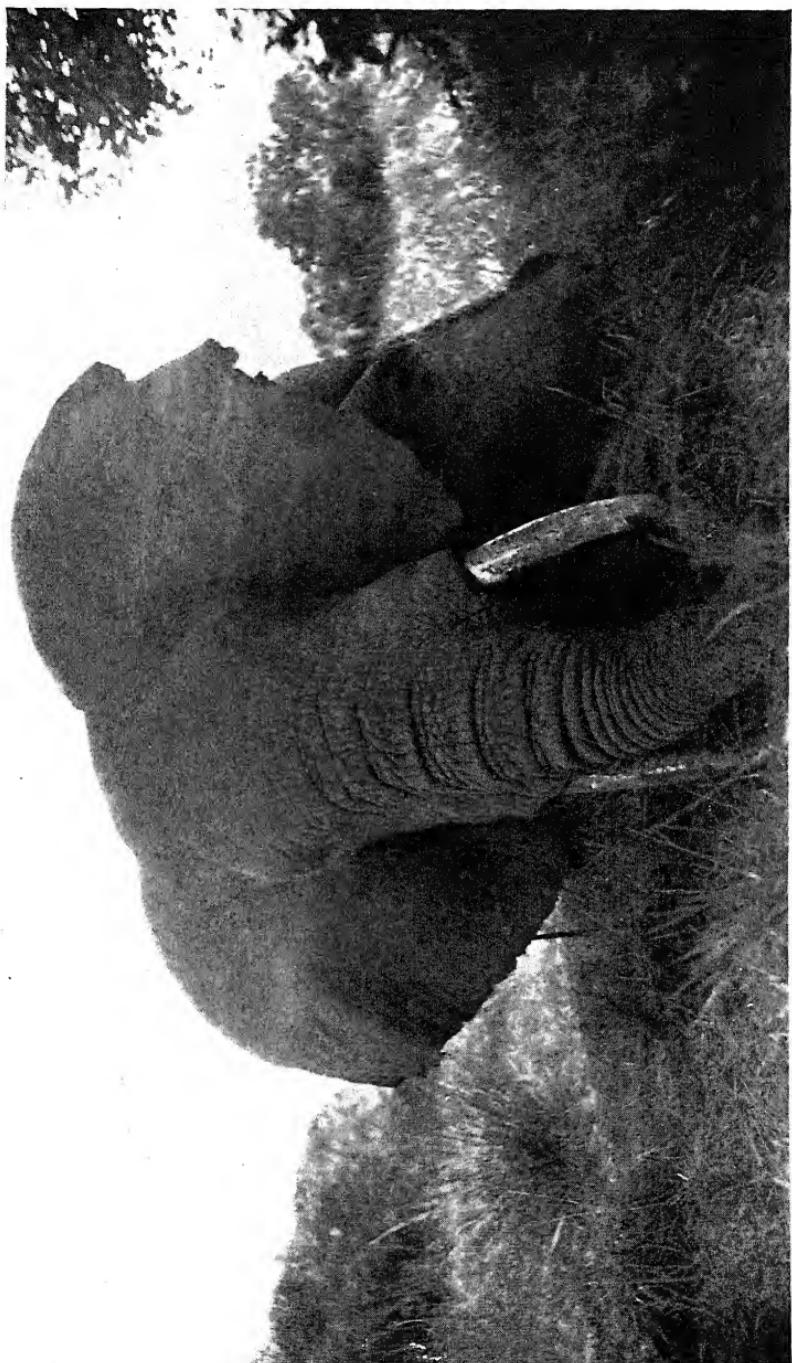
bed, and helped themselves to the contents of the cupboard. The guard did not wake up, and in the morning he swore that no one had come near him ! I was not gifted with these powers ; I found the heat and the organ note of the mosquitoes disturbing enough to keep me awake most of the night. Some of the brutes found their way into the net, of course ; they always do, despite the absence of apertures.

I lay and wondered how the Mbugwe managed to live with these pests. Perhaps they did not try to sleep until the chilly morning hours : sitting over their smoky fires, banging drums, and chanting, to while away the time. But how did they escape malaria ? Natives get malaria just as Europeans do. Long residence in fever country renders them less liable to the disease, but it does not immunise them. And in Mbugwe every second mosquito carried malaria germs ! I gave it up—mostly they died, I supposed ; those who survived were unlucky as far as I could see.

In the morning I was tired and depressed. I had little hope of finding a good hunting-ground, but the Swahili, when I made enquiries of him, was most optimistic. He knew of an excellent spot : a village half-way up the escarpment, where it was cool and healthy and richly stocked with game. He could not direct me : it was in thick forest ; but he would come with me and act as guide. I was loath to burden Lizzie with this additional weight, especially over a forest track, but she stood it all right.

We penetrated ten miles into the thickest of jungles along a cart-track that was one long hill. We crossed a swiftly flowing river, and I caught a glimpse of white tents.

A German and his wife were encamped there, said



ELEPHANT SHOT BY MR. J. A. HUNTER

the guide ; our destination was two miles further on. It was a little village perched on the side of the escarpment just below the steepest part. A long grass banda had been built as a shelter for safari porters, for this track led to Mbulu on the top of the cliff, the Government Post of the district. I was told that Mbulu was beautiful, with a perfect climate, but I never visited it ; I had too much walking to do in pursuit of game.

The banda served as kitchen and storeroom : I pitched my tent on a knoll under a tree close by. The jumbi of the village, and several of his men, were introduced. They were small, weedy specimens, amiably indifferent to the presence of a white man in their midst. I enquired about game and was told there was plenty, but no one could find it. This was as usual ; people who are not looking for animals seldom surprise them in forest country. The native whistles and sings about his work and his conversation can be heard a mile away. Why should any wild creature show itself to him ? When I speak of conversation being heard miles away I am not exaggerating ; in Africa sound travels farther than in other climes. I have heard and recognised a tune played on a gramophone nearly two miles distant. The native sees the spoor of game and knows it is there, but from his point of view it is most elusive.

The jumbi, a middle-aged man who looked as if he might be consumptive, was polite but unhelpful ; it was plain that he did not consider me the sort of hunter to throw money about. My guide departed, suitably rewarded, and I unpacked my gear, cleaned my rifles, and had a meal. In the afternoon the jumbi brought a heavily built, elderly man, with a bald head and a stupid face. This was Ranku, the local hunter : he knew

where all the game was. Ranku wanted five shillings a day for his services ; I offered five shillings for a rhino. After protest the terms were accepted.

In the evening Ranku and I set off into the forest to get meat. Two of the villagers followed us although it was plain they did not expect much profit from the expedition : I was unlike any white sportsman they had known and, to them, seemed a tyro. White hunters always travelled with wealthy clients and a big outfit ; a man with a single servant and an old Ford car could not know much about the hunting business and would probably take days to shoot a buck.

I found the forest dense and tropical. The heat was terrible. In that situation under the wall of the Rift there was no breeze ; every bush radiated moist heat like the effluence from an orchid house. Where I walked there were open glades, where forest buck might graze and a hunter see to shoot, but to right and left was dense bush and I did not relish the prospect of hunting dangerous game in it.

There was buffalo spoor about, and soon I saw the sharp hoof-prints of impala. I suggested to Ranku that we should follow this, but he shrugged his shoulders and passed it by. He was hoping to surprise the buck grazing, but we visited glade after glade and saw nothing bigger than monkeys. Again we came upon impala spoor, and this time I took the trail, ordering Ranku to follow. In five minutes I saw animals moving behind a screen of bush some distance ahead. I told the men to conceal themselves and began a careful stalk. Ordinarily I should not have tried hard for an impala, but it was important to impress the villagers with my ability to outwit the game, and I felt that if I missed this opportunity of getting meat there would be no other

chance that day. I devoted as much care to the stalk as if I were after buffalo. First I made a detour to get the wind dead right, then I struck straight for the screen of bush shutting off the meadow where the animals grazed.

I had to cross a long glade in the middle of which was a big windfall. When an animal hides behind a bush it keeps close to it so that it has a clear view through the interstices of leaves and twigs. My knowledge of the habits of impala told me that at least one beast was keeping watch upon the glade of the windfall, and it was my job to locate this sentry and escape her observation. I reached the fallen tree on hands and knees and at no time did my head show above its high trunk. There I rested, while I searched the bush a hundred yards away through my glasses.

I was feeling the heat badly ; it was like crawling about in a Turkish bath. I could see the indistinct outlines of grazing beasts behind the bush, and at last I picked out the sentry, standing motionless against the leaves. It was a young doe : beside her was a thicket through which I felt sure she could not see. I moved carefully sideways until I lost sight of her behind the thicket, then I advanced again at a rapid crawl. There was a chance that I was now in sight of another sentry, but I had to risk it. I arrived at the thicket on the opposite side from where the doe was standing, made my way round it, and reached the bush behind which was the herd. Standing erect, I caught glimpses of them through the leaves, but I had now to get into position for a shot. The sentry was within twenty yards of me ; she could not see me but she would hear me if I made a false step. I proceeded into the bush a yard at a time, taking each bramble or creeper and putting it under my

foot and controlling it before I stepped forward. It took about fifteen minutes to advance five yards, and all the time I expected the herd to grow tired of that particular glade and move off to another.

An hour had elapsed since I had started the stalk, and one cannot expect feeding buck to stay in one place all day. If they moved off I should have had my work for nothing : it would not be my first experience of such a disillusionment ; but I knew that precipitate action would not help. Still, I felt that the impala were about to move. I was mentally in touch with them ; they knew there was danger, and I knew they knew it. I made one more step, lay down and wriggled my shoulders under a bough, sliding the rifle before me. Parting the grass with the rifle barrel I could obtain a clear view of the glade. There were a score of animals, all in movement. The sentry was walking out from the bush ; the rest were trekking across my front towards another line of bush. Within eighty yards the big stag, leader of the herd, walked with quick, jerky steps across my field of view.

My rifle was a 9.3 mm. Mauser : I had never fired a round out of it and I did not know where to aim. There was no time for calculation ; I took a very fine sight at the stag's shoulder and let him have it. He sprang into the air and ran, but in twenty yards he dropped into a walk, staggered twice, and collapsed. I was pleased with the rifle ; an impala is not an easy beast to kill. The boys came up, glum-faced and indifferent.

"There is your meat," I said, pointing into the grass.

The change in their demeanour was instantaneous, they gathered round the carcass, laughing and joking.

"These men will skin and bring in the meat, and the horns for you, bwana," said Ranku.

I looked at him in surprise : " What do I want with swara horns ? " I enquired.

The natives exchanged glances : evidently I was an experienced hunter.

I took the shot-gun from Ranku and left him to follow with the rifle. I made a roundabout course back to camp and I did not ask him the way. He was obviously impressed. In the middle of a glade a couple of spur-fowl ran into a bush. I approached the bush.

" Throw a stone in there," I commanded.

He did so, and the spur-fowl took the air with a whir of wings. I let them get well away, then I dropped them with a right and left. Ranku said one word : " Vizuri ! " which means, " Splendid ! " Then we continued our homeward way.

On the trail we were overtaken by a tall, black native, another Juma. Juma is the Swahili for Friday : Crusoe's " Man Friday " was fittingly named for a savage, though he was not an imitator of the Swahili. This Juma had been a German asikari ; he had lived in the village since the war.

" How did you like being a German soldier ? " I asked him.

He threw out his hands : " Bad ! "

" It was bad on the other side also," I told him. " You prefer the English to the Germans ? "

He was positive that he did. " When the Germans came to collect hut tax and we could not pay, they flogged us : took our goats. When we cannot pay the English Sirkali they say : ' Next time you must pay or you will go to prison.' It is good to have time to pay."

" Yes : we all like living on credit," I agreed.

He became vehement. " English good ; Germans bad ! "

He was eager to please me. Another Juma who had

been my servant at the coast had preferred the German administration.

There was an outstanding and visible difference in the two methods of government which suggested much : the Germans built forts at every government post and they never went far from those forts without a body-guard ; the British wander about the country as though they were in the Home Counties. There were many executions during the German regime ; there are practically none now. The German administration was military ; the British is civil.

During the war German militarism was no worse than British ; I am sure of that. The difference is therefore not in nationality so much as in policy : a court martial was the same under Darius or Alexander, Napoleon or Wellington, Hindenburg or Kitchener—there is no humanity about war, and precious little about the people who make a profession of it. We took men of the Kavirondu nation to bear our material burdens in wartime. They were conscripted and brought down from the Lakes to engage in the white man's conflict, which was no concern of theirs. I used to see them, squatting naked about their fires eating their stodgy posho : poor stupid, unhappy savages. On the long treks through Tanganyika they died like the transport animals—in thousands.

There is a monument in Nairobi to those of the Carriers who gave their lives in the war. This is satanic irony ! It was unveiled by a lady who doubtless felt a sense of her own unworthiness before this evidence of men's unselfish heroism—even black men's ! This memorial also commemorates the slain K.A.R. asikari : they were warriors, strong-minded fighting men, and obedient, like all good soldiers.

Back in camp the jumbi interrupted my tea to congratulate me. To-morrow Ranku would show me rhino ; there were plenty of them in the forest. I cleaned my rifles and watched my Juma fraternising with the Mbugwe. He was as much at home with them as a British Tommy with foreigners—far more natural than a parson with his parishioners. After dark I ate curry and dried fruits, and lay down on my blankets to read about a blacksmith, a convict, and a child in the English shires. The moon shone brightly, the Mbugwe made merry in their pig-sty huts ; in the forest an eagle screamed, “he that is savage and will hurt man,” according to the natives. That fiery-eyed demon, screaming alone out in the black bush, was the voice of a million years of savagery.

When the singing and arguing had ceased and the village was quiet I heard a hissing outside my tent. An old hag had brought me the jumbi’s daughter. The girl stood chewing a stick, regarding me with a business-like air while the hag extolled her virtues. I told her to take her protégé to the cook, who, I said, was a rich man, and returned to my book.

I read authors like Dickens and Scott only in the wilderness, where their wisdom seems deep and permanent. In towns these books seem short-sighted and out of date ; in the towns we know too much to be easily imposed upon. Dr. Johnson had contempt for the countryman and his environment, but something of uncultivated nature creeps into every good book, even into Boswell’s life of the Doctor.

Before midnight I closed my book and lay staring out at the deep blue sky and the glowing moon. To-morrow I should kill, or be killed : rhino are dangerous beasts in thick forest. I was always conscious when

hunting big game of the possibility of accident, and it always seemed strange that in one short interval between dawn and dusk a man might cease to be a man and become something for which all his days have prepared him but of which he is entirely ignorant. In civilisation death is a dreadful, horrible thing, but in the wilderness it is the more acceptable for being so obviously natural. A signalman pulls over the points and the life force moves off on a divergent track—or into a dead end. It is as simple as that ; and as miraculous ! The man who started for Brighton arrives in the hereafter ; and only the signalman knows where that is. It is apparent that as one's wheels are flanged there is no need to worry : the tracks are in constant use ; one is not likely to be derailed. Go to sleep and forget it ! In the morning one will be master of one's fate and the signalman the servant of the public.

At dawn, after tea and toast, I started into the bush behind the self-contained Ranku. We dived down a declivity into leafy obscurity and came upon a river. The water ran thinly in the middle of a bed of white sand. We proceeded along the river-bed, walled in by dense jungle, and in half a mile we came upon another river-bed, quite dry, leading off at a tangent.

The morning became very hot ; thunder rumbled among the hills : I knew it was going to rain heavily before midday.

After a mile of the sand we struck off along a buffalo trail. The forest was tropical, the heat intense. Every now and then we came upon glades of rank yellow reeds ; there were outcrops of rock and little kopjies. Occasionally beside the path tortoises as big as wash-basins hissed malignantly.

Ranku always found the reptiles, plucked grass,

spat on it, and dropped it on their shells. To omit these propitiatory rites was to court destruction.

In five miles of hard going we found no rhino. This did not surprise me, for Ranku strode along the easiest paths like a man going on a journey, and, in my experience, he who does not seek does not find.

With the stranger's pathetic trust in the inhabitant I allowed him to go his own way, confident that he knew more than me. At noon we came to the edge of the plains and saw wilderbeeste grazing in the foreground.

"No rhino to-day," said Ranku cheerfully, squatting down in the shade of a bush.

He suggested that I should shoot wilderbeeste meat for the villagers. I left him sitting there and skulked off just inside the line of bush, watching the unconscious gnus whenever I caught a view of them between the clumps. I got within a hundred and fifty yards and crouched behind a fallen tree while I made ready to shoot. At the moment when I was pressing the trigger there was a sudden snort behind me, a crashing and a rumbling. I swung round, but too late; the rhino had made off into the thick stuff.

I had no difficulty in finding where he had stood drowsing beneath a bush. Ranku came up and we followed the beast's spoor cautiously for the next couple of hours, but we did not come up with him. Finally, we cut back to the river-bed and our sandy road to camp.

All during the morning I had been aware of stormy rumblings over the hills, and when I got into the clear lane of the water-course I saw dense cloud-masses, striped with lightning, above the Mbulu escarpment. They were getting it hot up there, but I thought we should escape the deluge. The twenty-yard strip which

was the dry river-bed was dazzling in the fierce sunlight ; it reflected the heat and glare like a tropical sea. Suddenly, round a curve, appeared a ridge of water a foot high. It curled over and over like a wave on a beach ; in a moment it broke round our legs and we were splashing through it. Another wave appeared, rolling along, chequered with yellow foam. In five minutes we were wading waist deep and had to climb the bank to safety. We made our way to camp along winding pig and buck trails, sweat-drenched and gasping in the hothouse atmosphere of the forest.

We had a little rain in the afternoon, but it soon cleared off and I sallied out to get a buck for my native friends. Proceeding down the Mbugwe track I reached the German's camp, where I was entertained to tea by him and his wife. They were properly equipped ; had a good tent, beds, tables, and many servants and porters. The German was an elderly, bespectacled man ; his physique was not robust. He spoke English moderately well, but his wife, a quiet, unassuming little woman, was forced to use Swahili to help out her conversation.

The German had been there a couple of weeks : he had got nothing but one hippopotamus. He complained bitterly of the forest, which he thought difficult and dangerous. That morning he had been within forty yards of buffalo and counted himself fortunate to have escaped accident. On the morrow he would break camp and clear off to the plains, where he could see what he was doing.

I agreed with him in theory but did not intend to leave without my rhino. I went on down the track in the evening light and shot a bush-buck and some spur-fowl. After more tea in my own camp I explored the river and found a good bathing-place. It was rocky

and the current was swift—my idea of a good river. Seated naked on the rocks watching the parrots and butterflies along the banks I thoroughly enjoyed myself : life and tobacco taste splendid in such surroundings, and there is no doubt that in the right environment man is better without clothes.

The Mother of Parliaments should sit in the nude ; a man has to be truthful with himself when naked : he puts off his civilised shibboleths with his trousers. In nothing but a pipe and a terai hat he looks a playful ape imitating something he is not—words cannot conceal the essential truth that one is happier making mud pies than building factories. Building cathedrals is another matter ; I will grant that spiritual entertainment is the quintessence of pleasure. Cæsar in a toga can bluff men that he is worth dying for ; bereft of his toga, the game is up !

I sat on a rock and pondered the curious human attribute of what Carlyle must have called “ r-r-rever-r-rence ” : the aptitude for supposing another man better than yourself. Animals have it not ; they are conscious of superior strength but not of superior merit. They are supreme egoists. At school one admired athletic heroes and erudite masters. In truth they were but schoolboys and pedants. In the war young subalterns respected grizzled majors and colonels who, being unable to respect themselves, rendered homage to generals and marshals. The generals and marshals respected their god ; there was never a great commander who did not pray for guidance to a greater—a general so experienced that anyone might be proud to take orders from him. I concluded that when the common man could say to his master : “ Don't tell me what to do ; ask, if I agree with you, I'll do it ! ” man would

at last be free ; for there is no real reason why an errand boy should feel inferior to a big-wig unless, like the dog, he is incapable of standing on his own feet, and would rather die under direction than live responsible.

As man is imposed upon so he imposes ; those creatures such as the dog, the horse, and the Asiatic elephant, whom he has persuaded to worship him, have reaped the reward of their credulity, but those others such as the cat, and the monkey, though oppressed, are not deluded. They know man for what he is : a creature afraid of the dark, kowtowing and desirous of being kowtowed to. They respect neither him nor the god he brought down to earth and blew sky-high on the battlefields of France : the chain of hero worship is finally broken when it arrives at the god-given independence of an old tom-cat.

So I attempted to understand things upon the rocks of an Mbugwe river, and the more I thought I understood the more convinced of my ignorance I became, so at last I determined to go on shooting wild animals that had never harmed me and to congratulate myself upon being the only enlightened creature in the universe.

The next morning we went rhino hunting again. This time we chose a different route, but the scenery did not alter. Ranku was leading the way across a pan of yellow reeds when I noticed fresh rhino-spoor at my feet. A glance round showed me a cactus, broken down and partly devoured. I snapped my fingers as a sign to Ranku to halt, but he was busy propitiating a tortoise and did not hear me. As he blundered about in the grass a big rhino dashed out from behind him and went tearing away, snorting like an engine. The native was in the way, I could do nothing, even if I had wanted to risk a hurried shot at a beast whose horn I could not see.

I told Ranku just what I thought of him as a hunter ; he was sullen and resentful for the rest of the morning and we had no luck.

In the afternoon I went down to my bathing pool again to consider the situation. I was tired of this camp and the hot, steamy forest ; I wanted to get my rhino and get out of it. I perceived that I was too respectful of Ranku's abilities ; the plain fact was that he was as poor a hunter as most generals are strategists, and that reputation can never atone for stupidity. I would walk by myself like the cat, who takes no advice upon the manner of his hunting.

That night I told the jumbi I had no further use for his expert. There was a great to-do about it. The jumbi was terribly afraid that I should not get a rhino by my own devices, and Ranku was wounded in feelings and pocket. But my decision stood : Ranku was paid off and went away grumbling.

In the morning he reappeared accompanied by that Juma who had been a German asikari and preferred the credit to the cash system. This man knew a certain place for rhino, I was informed ; it was in a swamp in a direction we had not tried. I said I would be led to the swamp but from there onwards I would do the leading. It was agreed : we set out.

On the trail we met a m'toto, a child of perhaps ten years, very black and very skinny. He addressed a remark to my bodyguard which was received in haughty silence. When I looked back the m'toto was following fifty yards behind us, his eyes round and expressionless in his black face. He followed us off the trail to the edge of the swamp, never drawing any nearer. There I lost interest in him, being occupied with the business at hand. Reedy grass grew thickly out of the ankle-deep

water : I did not mind a little wet, I was wearing water-tight moccasins reaching half-way to the knee, but I realised that this was only the overflow of the swamp, and expected deeper water before long.

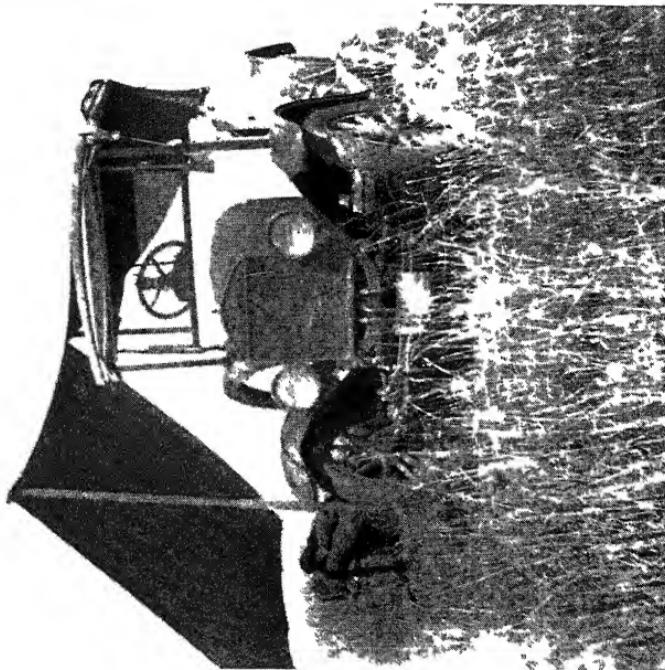
Juma indicated a direction and then fell behind with Ranku. I splashed slowly ahead, wondering how one could surprise any beast while making a noise like a paddle-steamer. There were dense clumps of bush every few yards, and I gave these a wide berth, keeping my ears open, for I had a feeling that something was near and I knew it could not move without making as much noise as myself. We went along for about a mile ; it was very hot and sticky and the flies were bothersome.

I think the swamp must have been a hundred yards away to my right, but I never saw it, for just as I was contemplating a change in that direction I heard snorts and the sound of splashing footsteps behind a line of bush to one flank. Chug-chug-chug, walla-walla-walla ! There were two of them, I judged ; they had heard us and were trotting across our front to get the wind. "Kifaru !" hissed Ranku. I scowled at him : the information was superfluous. They came to rest in a clump of bush some way ahead. I turned over my safety catch and went forward, ready to shoot quickly.

The grass at this point was waist high ; I hoped it was no longer further on, because a rhino does not stand very high and I wanted a clear shot at a charging beast. They could not have got my wind, although if they had gone another few yards they would have had it. When I was within fifty yards of the bush they came out with a rush, and for a moment I thought they were headed straight for me ; then I caught a glimpse of two big dun beasts travelling athwart my front on a course that would bring them closer than was pleasant.



RANKU, JUMA, AND THE M'TOTO



WAITING FOR PETROL OR RAIN

As I had feared, they were keeping to a strip of tall grass : I could only see their heads and withers unless they crossed an opening in the cover. The leader had a good-sized horn, but thin, like a female's ; the second one was obviously a female. I threw up the rifle, following their progress with the foresight. In a moment the leading beast appeared in full view as it crossed a buffalo lane in the reeds. I took a hasty shot at its shoulder—not behind the shoulder, which is the lung shot, but right at the shoulder-bone, which shot finds the heart or cripples the beast by breaking one or both legs. The rhino disappeared instantly into the grass. Without taking my attention off the spot where it had vanished I looked out of the sides of my eyes for the second animal, but could see no sign of it.

It is most important that a dangerous beast should not get up after it had been knocked down ; recovery from any but a mortal wound is rapid, and succeeding wounds seem inefficacious. One hunter has a theory that the first bullet exercises a paralysing effect on the nervous system so that afterwards the animal feels nothing, but whatever the reason, if one does not kill or incapacitate a rhino or buffalo with the first shot there is plenty of trouble in store.

I watched the grass, as taut as a fiddle-string, and the moment I saw a dun shape moving in it I let drive again. The bullet hit something with a smack, and then I saw by the diminishing commotion in the tops of the reed-like stems that my quarry was retreating rapidly towards the thick forest. When it had gone a hundred yards I caught sight of it and saw that it was the cow rhino. The bull must be lying in the grass : I went forward slowly, with my rifle ready.

The two boys were behind me, shivering with

excitement. Suddenly we came upon the recumbent rhino two yards from us. It lay still on its side. I stopped, watching it, ready, if it got up, to knock it down again. A spear lobbed over my head and stuck swaying in the beast's ribs ; its muscles tensed and its legs straightened.

"Piga ! piga !" cried both the natives. But I did not shoot ; I recognised that movement as the rhino's last.

It was a big beast with a fair-sized horn, which I estimated to weigh ten pounds. Just beyond where it lay was a hollow in which the grass was flattened. Evidently the second rhino had fallen down when I shot the first—perhaps the first had knocked it down when struck by the bullet. Whatever the cause, the cow had got up at the wrong moment and received my second bullet intended for her mate, for which I was sorry.

I took out my camera to photograph the trophy and immediately Ranku and Juma perched themselves upon it to be included in the picture. While I shuffled about in the grass, my attention upon the job in hand, I suddenly saw a third human figure appear in the view-finder. It was the m'toto ; his eyes rounder than ever, his lips still locked in silence. He sat on the rump and, although he did not know it, secured an introduction to sundry British and American people in that mythical land of ice and snow where the Wazungu, to the number of several thousands, flourish as the masters of Washenzi, who are their servants, but are not black like Africans.

I examined the huge bulk of the enemy. My bullet had gone through the middle of the leg and smashed the heart ; which shows how straight one can shoot when inaccuracy may mean disaster. I will not say I was apprehensive when I fired that shot, but I was when I thought it had not done what I intended it to do. The

sensation is rather like banging at an opponent's jaw in a fight and finding that he is merely enraged by the blow—there are bad times coming !

Leaving the boys to cut off the horns, I took the trail of the cow. I hoped she was not badly hurt but I had to make sure, and it is unpleasant work enquiring into the state of a rhino's health. There was blood on the grass through which her trail led ; that might mean a flesh wound or a hideous injury. A short distance away the trail entered the forest, and it was very thick forest : big trees, with much bush between their trunks. I went in cautiously, but the wind was going the same way as myself, and almost immediately I heard a snort and a crash and knew I was being charged. I stood close to a tree, ready to dodge behind it, and waited for what would happen. The rhino came plunging out of the bush and stopped level with me, about ten yards away. I saw that she was hit in the stomach and instantly shot her again in the side of the head. I had thought that at that range I should kill her at once, and was astonished to see her dash forward into cover again. I stood where I was, listening for the sound of her collapse, but instead of the thud and groan I anticipated came a furious snorting and crashing, and out she dashed, coming straight for me. My heart leaped as I saw her appear within six paces and realised that she had seen me ; then I had no more time to think of anything but trying to stop her. I shot her in the head again ; she swerved like a drunken man and vanished past me into a thicket. I stood as before, listening. There was no sound. She must be at her last gasp : I stepped towards the thicket. Immediately there was another crash, and out she came. I ran back round the tree and shot her in the side of the head as she passed over the spot where I had been

standing. My rifle barrel was within ten feet of her when I fired but the bullet seemed to have no effect ; she vanished again.

I began to think I should be killed and was very annoyed at my inability to drop the animal. This sort of thing was against all the rules : man places such reliance upon his weapons that he is shocked when they do not function as they should. The rhino was obviously dazed by the blows I had dealt it and had lost all power of coherent thought ; I was not in much danger after the first charge, but I thought I was, and at once became unreasoningly ferocious, as is my habit when I expect to be hurt.

I moved upon the bush with the intention of finding my antagonist and having it out, once and for all. A sound behind me made me spin round, and there were the boys, standing on the fringe of the forest, gaping at me. Ranku held my favourite rifle in his hand : a smaller bore, but a harder hitter. I went back and exchanged the .400 for the 9.3 mm. ; then I went after the rhino.

I got through the thicket and came into a little glade in which ran a stream. Under a tree thirty yards away stood the rhino. Her head was hanging and her breathing shook her whole body. She turned her head, from which blood was dripping, looked at me, and started forward at a staggering walk. I felt sorry for the animal ; I had never meant to shoot her in the first place, and in trying to remedy my mistake had caused unnecessary suffering. I wanted to kill her quickly so that I could close the chapter and forget about it, which is one's only refuge from conscious guilt. I fired at her shoulder with the rifle with which I could hit a door-knob at that range, and killed her stone dead.

I ought to have examined the carcass to find where my bullets had gone and why they had not done more damage, but I had no desire to inspect my handiwork. I lay down under a tree to smoke while the boys cut off the horns.

Having got my rhino I was eager to get out of the stuffy forest and breathe the free air of the plains again. It was necessary to return to Mbugwe for I was in a cul-de-sac, so I paid off my helpers and turned Lizzie back along the forest trail over which I had come. That meant another night with the Mbugwe mosquitoes and I did not find it any better than the first experience.

The next day we set out along the shore of Lake Manyara, at the further end of which I believed a river existed. The morning was calm and bright, but there had been a shower the previous day and the ground was sticky and uncertain. From the lake shore, across the still, shining waters, the escarpment and the forest in which I had walked so many exhausting miles looked cool and inviting. The country along the lake was flat back to a low line of hills several miles away, but in Africa even flat plains are rugged with dongas and rock outcrops and it was impossible to drive the car far away from the strand.

However, a clear road existed beside the water and we sped along at thirty miles an hour until midday, when a long tongue of rock swooped down from the hills and barred our way. There was no resort but to follow this back from the water in search of a passage. We were in difficulties almost at once : there were many flat pans of hard-baked mud on which reedy grass grew profusely, and it soon became evident that the mud might have been harder baked with advantage. It was soft enough to sink perceptibly under our heavily

loaded wheels and the tough grass impeded our progress without contributing to our support. Lizzie proceeded in low gear, fuming and groaning. After an hour of it we found a way through the rocks on to the "pori" beyond, but now we could not get down to the lake shore again.

I decided to make for a spur in the range of hills which seemed to converge upon the lake in the distance. We still had the baked mud and the reedy grass to contend with and our progress was at the rate of five miles an hour, with frequent stops to cool the engine and fill up with water. I guessed that in wet weather the whole of this district was under water, hence the cracked, sticky earth, and the grass growing like rushes, one stem to a root and several inches between stems—a most unpleasant land !

It was very hot and I was so thirsty that I drank nearly as much as the car. We had several chargles (canvas water-bags) tied on to the car, and an eight-gallon drum in the back, but our supplies did not last long. Juma regarded my insatiable thirst with apprehension ; he knew better than I the difficulty of finding pure water in such country. It seemed to me that we must strike a stream or a water-hole when we seriously tried to—was not the whole land sodden with moisture ? —but I had overlooked the fierce sun-heat and the absence of shade : there were no limpid streams in those surroundings.

We plugged steadily along until mid-afternoon, when Lizzie's commutator began to short-circuit and all her power ran out of her exhaust values. I pleaded and struggled with her but she had not shaken off the bad mood in which she had started this trip, and she refused to yield the secrets of her malady. With the last gallon

of water bubbling in the radiator we looked wildly round upon that desolate landscape, in which thousands of wilderbeeste stood regarding our plight with unsympathetic eyes, and nowhere could we see a donga or a hole which might contain the life-giving fluid. We had ditched ourselves good and proper !

The blue evening haze was already masking the hills —so near, but not near enough ; in the middle distance among scattered palm trees was a black, upright figure, unlike a palm tree. After a time it moved, and we saw that the animals near it were not wilderbeeste but cattle : it was a solitary Masai herdsman minding his herd.

We left the car and advanced upon him. He was a tall, gaunt, elderly man, with a stubble of beard and the bland, innocent expression of the true cow-man. In reply to our requests for water he waved his hand across the horizon, and said : “ N’gombe-e ? ” I never met a Masai who had not mislaid some cattle and who did not think that their recovery was of more importance than the fall of nations. We told him we had seen no cattle, and after a dubious grunt or two he led the way to a line of scrub trees where there was one of those clefts in the earth which you cannot see until you tumble into them. This had been a rushing river in the rains ; it was broad and deep enough to have taken the Thames at London Bridge, but at present it was quite dry except for two shallow pans of milky water. It was drinking water, although many people would not have thought so. I tasted the chalky, brakish stuff, and decided that we must make camp close to the larger pool to prevent any further pollution by game or cattle.

The Masai went off about his business ; we returned to the car which by this time had ceased to boil and sputter and, after a bout of pushing and hauling,

managed to get it to the edge of the gully, where a tree afforded shade.

I pitched my little tent in an open spot away from the grass ; Juma established his kitchen in the river-bed under the tree. By the time night fell and the sky was dotted with radiant stars we were comfortably settled, and the evening meal prepared. We would have to stay in that camp while I diagnosed Lizzie's trouble, and until the pori hardened enough to make the going easier.

The night was cool and there were few mosquitoes about. I slept soundly after the fatigues of the day. Juma had emptied the car, drawn down the canvas curtains, and made himself comfortable. Just before dawn there was a sharp shower of rain which undid all that the previous day's sunshine had accomplished in hardening the ground. I was annoyed but not dismayed ; the dry season was due and these intermittent showers could not persist. Meanwhile we had water and food and could stay in that spot indefinitely.

Early the next morning I set out to visit the hills. The pori glared under the morning sun : it looked as flat as a tennis court, but I knew that between me and the hazy hills I should find dongas and valleys in which cities could be hidden. The Masai had taken his beasts and departed, and goodness knew where he had gone, since, apparently, there was no water nor place of refuge for him. In these districts the Masai guard the secret of water-holes from strangers. I divined that the pool beside our camp was expected to dry up in the near future and was therefore not of much importance. This suspicion did not worry me ; I was confident of finding a stream in the hills.

After five miles of trekking I came to a donga and

plunged down into the bush with which it was lined. Something crashed in that bush five yards from me ! I stood silent, waiting for the creature's next move.

At the moment of alarm I had thought I had heard a growl, but was not sure that the sound was not that of my field-glasses rubbing against the rifle. In the circumstances it was unwise to move before I knew what I was up against. The animal's nerve gave first, he broke cover with a rush up the further bank. I saw something moving through the grass, fired, and killed a striped hyena. This variety is less common than the spotted kind : it is smaller and more elusive, but is even more destructive.

It was blindingly hot in this valley, the only shade was thrown by dwarf palm trees ; the wilderbeeste stood dejectedly, resigned to the heat which they could not escape from. A few miles away the lake reflected the glare like a mirror ; it was impregnated with soda and nothing could drink from it. There were more wilderbeeste along the shores of that lake than I could count, and I knew they must drink somewhere, but no one seems to know how long the animals can go without water, and an all-night walk to get a drink would be no hardship for them. There were no zebra, which indicated that water was a long way off, for the zebra likes to quench his thirst at least once daily.

Watching the saturnine gnus glowering at me as I passed them I was reminded of a story told me by an old Dutch hunter. He had brought an American party to this place and one of the visitors concocted a scheme to make a cinematograph picture of a lion killing a wilderbeeste. They had already trapped a lion ; a small boma was built and a big bull wilderbeeste was driven into it. The lion was then liberated in the boma and

the photographers gathered round to make the picture. The lion lay down beside the thorns, lashed his tail and growled ; the wilderbeeste walked about snorting, looking for a way out. When his investigations brought him near the lion he put down his head and charged. The lion got up and ran, and the wilderbeeste hustled him along from behind. Then the lion lay down again and the wilderbeeste continued his tour of the boma. Whenever he wished to examine the spot where the lion lay he butted him out of the way, and the lion always turned his back to this punishment.

The visitors were disappointed ; the Dutchman was astonished. He knew that lions kill wilderbeeste and that wilderbeeste are scared of lions, but his clients thought the monarch of the plains a poor-spirited beast. Nothing could make that lion fight, and eventually, after he had been gored past hope of recovery, they shot him. The Dutchman then took a kerosene tin and beat it out flat ; on it he printed : "Don't shoot this animal," and having roped the wilderbeeste attached the sign-board to its horns and set it free.

"If you ever visit Manyara, look out for that wilderbeeste !" he advised me as he concluded his story.

"He has probably been killed by a lion before now," I answered.

I was annoyed that simba should have been subjected to such indignities : I remembered the cowed, bewildered attitude of soldiers (whose daily portion it was to encounter danger and suffering) when they were ordered about by "hospital-wallahs" and cantankerous nurses. Is there any limit to the diversity of animal psychology ? —or any proper understanding of it ?

Despite my prophecy I kept a watch for the heroic wilderbeeste, but I did not see him. The hills slowly

drew nearer as I trudged through that baked, desolate land ; by midday I crossed a big valley and ascended a long slope to a tree-capped ridge. There was a quantity of bush about, but the ground was dry and stony and I recognised that this hill was not high enough to attract the rain clouds. On the top of it I rested under a podocarpus and surveyed my surroundings. I could see my white tent very plainly ; it looked two miles away, but I knew it was about fifteen.

Beyond the hill on which I rested lay another valley : more dried mud and reeds ; and across it another hill, no higher than the first one. The main range was many miles away, and I saw with disgust that black storm-clouds were beginning to gather about its wooded crests. In the valley a big herd of oryx grazed in fancied security. Oryx are fond of water ; I thought I had better see what their grazing ground was like. They caught sight of me when I emerged on to the pori and drew off in their usual suspicious fashion, keeping me in plain view to see that I did not start any funny business. Had I vanished into a donga they would have run half a mile without stopping, but I could not find even a donga in that sun-scorched plain.

At last I turned campward, weary and thirsty. It was nearly dark when I crossed a valley towards a low ridge, beyond which I knew the camp lay. It was only by exercising all my determination that I reached the ridge ; the heat had been too much for me, I was on the point of exhaustion. I arrived at a single palm tree on the crest and, breathing prayers of relief, looked round for my tent.

When I saw that it was still two miles away I could have burst into tears. Sitting in the shade of the sheltering palm I fanned the flies from my scorched face and

tried to summon resolution to cross that two miles of pori. At the end of an hour I was still sitting there ; the fiery sun was sinking and I had not found the resolution to trek. Then it occurred to me that Juma's fire was in the river-bed and that he would not have sense to light the lantern in my tent until I arrived to utilise it, so that if darkness overtook me before I reached shelter I should have an unpleasant journey, out half the night without water. I found resolution to avoid that eventuality.

Supposing a rhino had charged me on the last half-mile of that trek, I should not have attempted to get out of the way, I should have plodded on to destruction, for I had reached that state when there was room for but one idea in my head, and that was the necessity of walking. When I stopped, I stopped completely, like a run-down clock. Juma brought me tea ; I drank all he brought and ordered more.

I had walked about thirty miles, but it was not the distance so much as the drought that had exhausted me ; it seemed that my blood had become thickened through constant evaporation from the pores of my skin. Unfortunately it is impossible to repair this wastage of liquid immediately. You may fill your stomach with water as I did mine, but it takes time for absorption and meanwhile the body still insistently demands liquid, so that one is consumed with thirst while sluicing about like a half-filled barrel. How many mugs of tea I drank I do not remember ; I know that I drank them very hot and burnt my mouth.

About half an hour after this gulping I dragged myself down to the pool to bathe. The smaller pool was my bath tub ; it was six inches deep, tepid, and when I moved in it grey mud rose up in swirling clouds to

still further befoul the water. Several birds assembled awaiting their nightly drink : one or two yellow-legged spur-fowl with dabs of yellow on their throats, a flock of guinea-fowl, cheeping and prying among the rocks.

I finished my unsatisfying bathe when the stars were out, and before I returned to my tent I lay on a rock at the bigger pool and gulped down a few pints of filthy liquid. Then I went up to dinner, was violently sick, and, revolting at the food, set myself to drinking and vomiting alternately. I passed an unpleasant night and awoke in the morning still thirsty. I crawled about and shot some guinea-fowl and after breakfast set myself to repair the car.

The water seemed more unpalatable than ever ; I found that hyenas had been drinking at the pool during the night. Tea which is half-grey mud and smells of lion kills is unpleasant, particularly when one is forced to drink quantities of it. I began to hate the Manyara country with all my soul.

The following morning we loaded Lizzie and started back for the Arusha road ; I wanted to get out of the Rift Valley at all costs. The going was a little better, but still heavy, and the muddy water in the radiator boiled and evaporated at a great rate. By midday we had used all our water and then discovered that our spare tin of petrol had leaked away. Within an hour we were stuck for want of fuel. I judged that we were still thirty miles from Mbugwe : an unpleasant predicament.

Juma started for civilisation provided with money to buy petrol. I gave him half a charge of water, keeping a kettleful myself. He expected to reach Mbugwe by midnight and to start on the return trip at dawn. Burdened with a tin of petrol he could not reach me before the following night, which meant that I must kill time

and possess my soul in patience for thirty-six hours at least. I rigged the tent fly over the car and sat down with my book to make the best of it. By sundown I was heartily sick of inactivity ; it was very hot and I could not keep my mind off the subject of tea. I decided I must have one mug at all costs. After I had drunk it I felt more cheerful and went for a walk over the sand to a line of palm trees in the distance.

I sat under the palm trees looking out over the shimmering pori and the glassy lake at the green forests of the escarpment where not many days before I had bathed, and drunk my fill, in a cool, rushing river. I realised that one mug of tea does little to quench a thirst almost perpetual in that oven-like climate. Lying in the midst of such immensity, stared at by quaint, stupid animals, whose thoughtful detachment seemed a part of the unheeding wilderness, I cursed the flies and the country. I was so utterly alone that I had an opportunity of realising how absurdly insignificant I was in a world I did not understand and of which I had only a brief and precarious tenure.

The wilderness brooded in the evening light ; it was impossible to suppose that it had any interest in me or that my hurried and fitful activities could attract its notice. I endowed the world with a soul and contemplated it driving upon its way, occupied with a purpose beyond my comprehension—pondering a vision a million years remote. It was plain that I worried it less than a fly worried me. My world-soul would be the satrap of a universal diety ; it was under orders to accomplish some task in conformity with a plan to which the other numerous satraps, even then beginning to light up their charges in the eastern sky, also contributed their efforts. The world-soul would be in

communication and collusion with those others, of course : they were all working to some definite end at the dictates of the Higher Command.

For a moment I had that helpless feeling the private soldier has when he sees the grim, preoccupied face of his general, as he passes by in his big car, pondering the plan of campaign that will drive men through toil and torment to an unknown but vaguely dreaded culmination in the imponderable future. I imagined I heard the words : " You cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs," and felt that I was one of the eggs to be broken.

I hurried back to my shelter and the piece of rusty machinery in which I placed my trust to carry me away from the inscrutable presence of my Commander to the soothing companionship of the ranks, where I could once more recapture the arrogance of individuality. I slept beside the car, and several hyenas prowled round me all night as though they recognised my plight. In the morning they were standing some distance away watching me interestedly. I took a shot at one but missed ; the others then ran away. The morning became very hot ; under my canvas shelter I sat and stewed. The remainder of the water made two mugs of tea, which seemed to soak out of my skin while I drank it, leaving me as thirsty as before.

I turned for comfort to my book. The doings of a young man in London a century ago were unreal and unimportant. Natural man is occupied with the vital problems of existence ; civilised man manufactures problems as insubstantial as moonshine. It seems that most stories about man are a catalogue of his troubles ; if he had no troubles there would be no story. The magnitude of his troubles is the measure of their interest

to the troubled reader. What importance have the hopes and perplexities of mythical young men when one anticipates death from thirst in the unsympathetic wilderness? Love affairs, business rivalries, honour, and disgrace, are of little account when one draws near that door which opens once for every man and, having closed behind him, shuts life and its vagaries off from him forever.

As the day advanced I became more convinced that Juma would spend my money on women and beer and awake to a sense of his responsibilities only after his capital was exhausted. He would then fly from the wrath to come and leave me to escape from my predicament as best I might. I had not known him long, but I knew the mentality of his kind too well for my peace of mind. If he did not return to time I should have to walk into Mbugwe; but thirty sandy miles without water and with a twenty-four hours' thirst to start upon was a big job: I had very little hope of accomplishing it. I had been knocked out by thirst before. One sweats all moisture out of one's system and then begins to dry up. One becomes light-headed and loses all sense of direction, and that is the danger—wandering in circles, babbling and singing: getting more foolish and more thirsty every minute.

If I had not made that futile trip into the hills in search of water I could have reached Mbugwe, but I was still feeling the effects of that experience. Busy with calculating my chances, I looked up to see huge dun clouds encroaching upon the glaring heaven. The air was sultry and still; I knew at once that it would rain. Within an hour the water was streaming off my tent fly and all my pots and pans were full to the brim. The shower lasted twenty minutes, then the clouds

dispersed and the sun blazed out again. By nightfall the pori showed no signs of having been moistened : there had been just enough rain to supply me with water and not enough to bog the car. The face of the wilderness seemed stern no longer ; it wore a smile in the sunset light.

The next morning Juma arrived with a tin of petrol and we were able to resume our journey. At the road, I turned straight off to Arusha ; I had no desire to spend another night in Mbugwe. We got within thirty miles of Arusha and there camped on a dry water-course. Up above the road crossed a plain, and I remembered to have seen eland there on the outward journey. Probably there was a water-hole somewhere near but at the moment I had no need to search for it.

At dawn a lorry containing three young Dutchmen came down into the valley. They were very excited and pleased with themselves, having seen a score of lions on the plain, and shot one. After they had departed I told Juma to pack his cooking pots ; we would go lion hunting. I felt sure about the water-hole now, and when we had got up on to the plain I left Juma in the car and went looking for it. Half a mile from the road a big rugged kopjie stood up against the sky ; it was covered with scrub-bush which extended for miles in every direction. A water-course descended from the kopjie, and in this I expected, sooner or later, to find a pool. But I did not find it : the most likely spots were all bone dry.

After an hour of fruitless search I blundered upon an old Masai in charge of some cattle. He said he came from a manyatta a day's journey away ; he had brought the cattle to that place for grass and at night would take them away again. Masai cattle can do without water for

three days or more, so I believed the old man when he told me there was none in that district. I enquired about lions, saying that I had shot many and desired to shoot more. Without a word he took me to a hole in the donga where lay the half-eaten carcass of a heifer. He pointed dramatically at the murder, then beckoned me to follow him out on to the veld, where stood a single thorn tree in a grassy hollow. I expected another lion kill, and was astonished to see a large pool of grey water in the bottom of the hollow. Evidently the herdsman was eager to assist me to punish the persecutors of his stock.

Bringing the car through the bush to the pool was not easy, but I accomplished it, and pitched my tent close to the water. The Masai collected his cattle and trekked for his manyatta, leaving me to avenge his wrongs. All the afternoon I scouted through the bush looking for the lions but without success. Unless there was other water, unknown to the Masai, the game must come to my pool, and as I sat drinking my tea I kept a watch on the grassy banks of the hollow expecting to see heads appear over it. The first visitors were zebra; they saw that the hollow was occupied and retired up on to the plain to neigh and fret about the problem of the evening drink.

Finishing my tea I walked after them and shot one: the others decided they must trek to another water-hole and departed. I did not cover the carcass; I reasoned that the lions were lying up on the kopje somewhere and that if they saw vultures dropping they would come down at dark to see why. Since darkness was not an hour away the vultures would not have time to demolish the kill—unless they gathered in hundreds, which I did not think likely in bushy country.

Seated in my tent once more it was not long before I saw several birds come wheeling down the sky to drop from sight behind the hill. Everything was going according to plan. Presently I heard guinea-fowl calling in the donga ; I took the shot-gun and went after them, for the larder needed replenishing. Coming back up the hill with a brace of birds in my hand, I felt thick-headed and suddenly began to shiver. I had been tired and listless all day but no thought that the Mbugwe mosquitoes had infected me had crossed my mind. Now I knew I was "for it," and before long I was in it ; shivering like an aspen, my head one intolerable ache through which rattled startling explosions as though a rifle were being fired against my ears.

I lay down under the blankets and waited miserably to perspire, although I knew several hours would elapse before I did so. Juma brought me tea and a bowl of soup. I drank the tea, which tasted horrible, but could not face the soup. My temperature rose steadily and I began to plot and plan those wonderful schemes that the malaria patient devises. The mind becomes preternaturally active ; the brain is acute enough to grasp and consider the most intricate problems without effort. I used to play splendid chess games when suffering from malaria, and have often thought that could I have the mental stimulus of the disease without its exhausting effects I should handle life's problems with brilliance and despatch. It might be a good scheme to inoculate cabinet ministers with malaria at every political crisis ; it would astonish the world to hear them talking rapidly and lucidly with the capable vigour of a ship's officer in a storm. When one considers the difference in method between the navigating of a ship and of the ship of state one wonders what would happen if

statesmen tried to take a windjammer round the Horn ! Such facetious and entertaining imaginings were mine as I lay in my tent and wrestled with the malaria bug.

About midnight I heard lions busy with my zebra kill up on the plain. I had intended to steal upon them at dawn but it was doubtful if I should be able to shoot straight, for at dawn my temperature would drop to subnormal and the chill air would rattle me like a pair of bones in the grasp of a nigger minstrel. Before dawn I broke into a profuse sweat and then slept awhile. When I awoke it was time to go lion hunting, but I felt so ill and helpless that lions had no attraction for me. The sun had warmed the air before I turned out and wandered over the veld.

The lions had dragged the zebra five hundred yards down towards the donga. It was half-eaten but there were no vultures on it, which indicated that someone was on guard. I approached cautiously, trembling with weakness and excitement. Had I seen a lion I expect I should have been as steady and as full of fight as the occasion required : I know that sudden danger will turn an invalid into a mettlesome fighter—even a victim of sea-sickness. I remember lying in a tent at a place called Quadirima listening to the South African Infantry holding a band concert. My temperature was 104 and I did not appreciate the concert. Neither did the Germans, apparently, for they made a night attack upon the camp. In the uproar that followed I was one of the first to get out in the bush, rifle in hand, keeping myself well clear of the camp fires and the unfortunate band.

On this occasion I had no doubt that I would react similarly if a lion showed himself anywhere near, but no lion did ; I was allowed undisputed possession of the kill. I covered it up with bush and valiantly determined

to return to it in the moonlight and surprise the lions at their feast. But at evening I began to shake again and that night was worse than before.

In the morning I decided to trek ; a few more attacks of fever would make it impossible for me to drive over the difficult road to Arusha. Weak and dizzy I assisted Juma to strike the tent and load the car, then I steered her back to the road and began the weary journey.

We reached Arusha by nightfall and I went to bed with a high temperature again. For two more days the fever tormented me, then it departed as suddenly as it had come, and I was able to set out for Nairobi. It took me three days to reach it, but I gained strength all the time, and when I passed through the town and took the road for Nakuru I was feeling in fine fettle. Lizzie had got over her sulks and we were bowling along merrily when, eighteen miles from Nairobi, a big end ran and the engine began to clang like a smithy. I had neglected to notice a leak in the radiator ! There was nothing to do but return to Nairobi by train, collect a mechanic, and bring him back with me to repair the car. I got home to Nakuru three days later and promptly had another attack of fever. It took me several weeks to shake off the disease.

That is the history of an unfortunate trip, and from it one may learn a lesson : never to persist when the little devil that operates the hoodoo gives warning that he is on duty. In after years when I was outfitting safari I could always tell if my clients' trips would be pleasant and profitable or the reverse : it all hinged upon the degree of smoothness with which the preliminaries were arranged.

CHAPTER VI

SAFARI TANO

THE Mara River runs out of the Mau down across the Loita Plains and over the Tanganyika border. My wife and I intended exploring a portion of it on the Kenya side of the line. We loaded our safari gear and three dogs into a Cheverolet box-body car and set out through the Masai Reserve, which held for us many pleasant memories. The three dogs were Mick the terrier, Bingo the wolf-hound, and Frika, a young Great Dane. Mick was now old and worn but still active and capable; Bingo was decrepit, having had both his front legs broken, which injury had retired him from the active list, relegating him to the position of camp guard and follower; Frika was young and inexperienced but eager and receptive. The purpose of our expedition was not to shoot animals but to observe them, and to have a good time while doing it. Our first camp on the Loita was without event and on the second afternoon we arrived at the Mara. It flowed at the bottom of a huge valley and all the valley was full of thorn bush.

For some time we drove across the veld trying to find a way through the thorns, and eventually we thought we had succeeded, for the line of bush receded in a long re-entrant, and when we had negotiated a deep and rocky donga by the lucky chance of a game trail we were able to drive boldly to within two miles of our

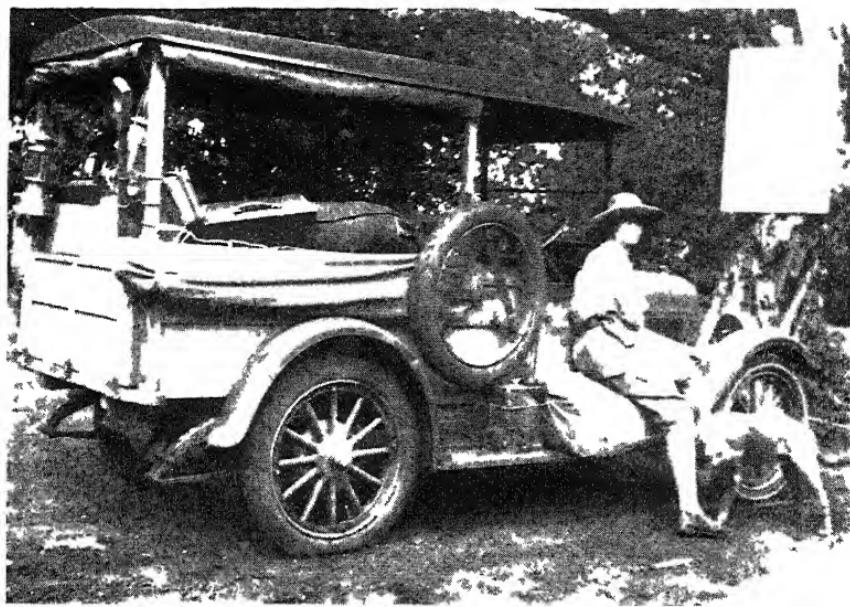
objective. Then our real troubles commenced. Our path through the bush began as we wished but soon continued as the bush wished. From trail to trail we turned and twisted, forcing the car through and over thorn bushes which sprang up again from under the axle, enclosing us in a wilderness of boughs and twigs. The tyres, luckily, were new, for they bristled with long white thorns, the radiator boiled and the engine growled and swore, but continued to push us deeper into the maze whenever I found a path that was possible for wheels to run on. We spent the whole afternoon working through that bush but in the evening we came out on the banks of the river. It was a fine, broad, swift stream and we were pleased with it. We found a secluded spot where a little clearing was protected on two sides by a bushy donga joining the river, and on the third by a ridge of quartz rocks. The fourth side was the river itself, which here ran among boulders and tiny islands.

It took us some time to locate this camp site, and just as I pulled the brake lever hard up as a sign that our long and fatiguing journey was terminated the heavens opened and the last deluge of the rainy season descended upon us. We cowered in the car while it rained the way it does on the Equator—cats and dogs. In ten minutes the ground was awash; in twenty, the place where I wished to pitch the tent was a broad river, three inches deep. It grew dark quickly and the fury of the rain showed no sign of abating; rather it seemed to increase.

I had to get that tent up before night. In getting it out of the car I was soaked to the skin; when I unrolled and spread it on the ground it began to collect water until, by the time I had the poles fixed, it looked like a

frogs' swimming bath. It was then Babs' turn to come out and get wet. We adjusted the ropes and altogether with a yo-heave-oh we pulled ; but nothing happened. It was a big tent and it was held down by a few score gallons of water. I drove two tent pegs at the ends of the poles, to keep them from slipping, and I drove two more at the ends of the main guys and instructed Babs to stand by one of them ready to make fast when I gave the word. I then went round to one end of the ridge-pole and lifted it as high as I could off the ground. Babs strained on the guy rope and made it fast and we repeated the trick at the other side. The water drained off the canvas but it was sodden and still too heavy for us. I cut a stout forked stick and heaved the ridge-pole up with it at alternate ends while Babs took up on the guy ropes. Once the tent was beyond the angle of forty-five it was easy. This is one way of getting a tent up when it is too heavy for you ; I invented it myself on the spur of the moment.

When I had hammered in the two dozen pegs which make a tent secure and habitable and which is a job I hate, Babs had managed to unpack the chop-boxes and erect the table. By the time we had finished these jobs it was nearly dark and the rain had stopped. I paused to drink whisky out of an enamelled mug and announce—while the water ran down my back and out of my boots—that it was fine to be out in the wilds again. The river was rushing by behind the bushes, hyenas were beginning to wail, bats were flitting, stars shining ; the sky was a newly washed blue and the wind smelt of heath, and health, and flowers, and happiness—in short it was a Kenya evening after rain, two hundred miles from anywhere. Mick and Bingo stood and watched me, a world of longing in their eyes. Was I going to shoot something for supper ? Frika, whose first safari it was,



EN ROUTE TO THE MASA



AT THE STORM

galloped about behaving like a puppy, to the disgust of the older dogs.

While Babs prepared supper I collected firewood and even walked a little distance out on to the plain behind the rocks, so that I could listen to the quiet night and feel once more that thrilling sense of loneliness—the unimpeded contact with the moods of Nature—which had for many years been my privilege and which for a whole dreary year I had been denied. I have been denied it for two years as I write these words, and although during most of that time I have been busied with steamers and trains, men and cities, I am still homesick—still shut in by low skies and sudden small hills. If I walk out now into the darkness I can see no house, no man-made obstacle, but I test the feel of the night and I know that I am shut in ; I cannot hear the mighty pulse of Africa nor feel upon my cheek the wind that blows across a thousand miles of solitude. A gull cannot be content in a farmyard, which is probably foolish of the gull. I knew a man in Cape Town who rescued a gull which had lost a wing. He put it with his poultry, and all day it stood looking at the sky. In the end he killed it, for he was a man of tender heart.

That is what you do when you put wild things into cages. I am not a wild thing by any means, but I have had just sufficient experience of freedom to understand the evils of captivity. Keats wrote to one who had been long pent in a city ; if he had been a wild man he would have written to everyone pent in modern civilisation, for assuredly we are captives although most of us are unaware of it.

We celebrated our first night in camp with a brew of hot grog and went to our blankets tired but happy. In the morning we commenced our exploration of the

river. We left Bingo in camp, for his legs were not sound enough for much walking ; Mick and Frika accompanied us. There were some fine open glades along the banks ; impala, wart-hogs, and baboons were very plentiful, and zebra came down from the high veld to drink morning and evening. Mick had a feud with wart-hogs. Perhaps he objected to their ugliness, perhaps it was because he had been frequently damaged by them and cherished motives of revenge ; but whatever the reason he lost no opportunity, when my eye was off him, of pursuing these fierce, ungainly animals.

I will not attempt to describe the wart-hog except to say that in the opinion of a cavalry sergeant I knew it is “the ugliest thing in creation bar a field-artillery-man’s wife.” It lives in holes in the ground, into which it retires backwards when pursued. This is so that it can fight the pursuer should he try to follow it into the hole. Wart-hogs will fight, and they are huge, powerful beasts with long tushes. The top tushes curl up like the Kaiser’s moustache, but it is the short lower ones that are dangerous ; they are as sharp and pointed as a dagger.

At this time most of the hogs were in sounders, and there were a great many of them. Wherever we went we saw families : mama and papa, and a following of hurrying, grunting piglets ; and always Mick had to be sharply spoken to before he relinquished his hopes that he might be allowed to chase them. The old boars were most amusing. The moment they caught sight of us they would become agitated and begin to bustle the wife and children, much like a fussy father on a day trip to the seaside when he sees a uniformed official coming and fears he is somewhere he ought not to be. When the family were on the move, trotting away to

the bush and safety, the old fellow would select a hole—nervously and uncertainly, often changing his selection several times before finding satisfaction—then he would back his haunches into it, brandish his tusks, snort his defiance, and prepare for battle. The chivalry of these animals is none the less noble because they are hideous and destructive. It is not every paterfamilias who would stand up to a lion in defence of his charges, and we were more dangerous to those wart-hogs than any lion is to man.

In the days that followed we shot a zebra for a lion kill, for we were obliged to play about with the big carnivora, as boys climb trees for the thrill of escaping broken limbs. At the instant I fired at the zebra a solitary wart-hog broke cover from behind us and immediately Mick was off in pursuit, with Frika behind him. I was using my wife's .256 Mauser, a rifle I was unacquainted with, and I did not drop the zebra ; it cantered away through the bush. It took me an hour to find and kill it, and all the time I could hear the distant barking of Mick, fighting with the wart-hog. I was much annoyed, for had the dogs fulfilled their duty they would have held the zebra for me and saved me a lot of hard work.

As soon as we had concealed the kill we hurried off to the help of our disobedient servants. We found them down by the river in a clump of thick bush. We entered it cautiously on a thin buck trail, guided by Mick's furious barking. There was a hollow, terminating in a bank out of which grew a tree ; and below the bank, half-way down a hole, was the wart-hog at bay.

Mick and Frika faced it, barking and feinting : Frika having the time of her life without being serious, but Mick as determined upon a fight to a finish as if he had been baying a serval cat. When I saw what was toward

I proposed taking a photograph of the fight, but from where we stood the bank concealed all but the wart-hog's head ; it would be necessary to approach from another side to get a good view of it.

We made a detour and came into the hollow from the other end, about ten yards from the battle. Mick, realising that his signals had at last brought assistance, began to leap at the hog like a demon and Frika joined in, shrieking with glee, evincing ferocity but taking care not to get close enough to be damaged. Mick was in his element, panting and dishevelled ; it was the sort of job he loved. Though I was not in sympathy with him I could not help admiring his skill : when he jumped at the hog and the hog dived forward, striking with its tushes, the dog met tush with teeth, guarding himself like a practised fencer. The clash of bone on bone was loud and unmistakable, and how Mick escaped losing all his teeth was a mystery. The wart-hog was a sow, which made Mick's crime in pursuing her more disgraceful.

Babs opened the camera while I stood ready to use the rifle. There was a possibility of the hog leaving her shelter, breaking through the dogs, and charging us. Unfortunately Babs is a bad photographer. In moments of excitement she invariably takes the foreground from a spot about a yard in front of her feet so that the object to be registered is either perched on the extreme top of the negative or left altogether to the imagination.

We have some fine photographs like that ; full of interest to those who can accept a literal description of the exciting events which happened just two feet beyond the top of the picture. They are rather like views of the battle-field of Trafalgar a hundred years after the engagement. She has a beauty of the main street of

Madeira, which is mostly street, but shows specimens of the inhabitants rather far north, all leaning at an angle of forty-five degrees, making one feel that the motion of a long sea voyage has been incorporated into the picture.

Knowing these idiosyncrasies I warned her to be sure and get the wart-hog slap in the middle of the view-finder. She persevered for a minute or two and then said hopelessly that she felt sure she was going to make a mess of it.

" You do it," she said.

I rested the rifle (in which there was but one cartridge) against my leg, and took the camera, still watching the excited hog with one eye. It was as well I did so, for just as I received the camera the beast made a rush at Frika, allowing Mick to slip between it and the bank and make an attack in rear ; a strategem he had worked for throughout the fight.

There was nothing for the hog to do but make its escape from an untenable position, and since we were in the way we had to be moved. I handed back the camera in a hurry, grabbed the rifle, turned over the safety-catch, and was just in time to shoot from the hip when the hog's tushes were within a foot of my leg. The bullet missed its back and struck it in the hind leg. It was lucky that I had not a leopard to deal with—but then, I should not have taken such chances with a leopard. The blow of the bullet distracted the beast's attention ; probably it thought Mick had caught it, for instead of ripping at me, it swung its head round to the rear, and in an instant was past us, rushing up out of the hollow with the dogs in pursuit.

We followed and found the fight renewed under a low-growing bush. We had started out that morning

with no thought of shooting : I had not brought my rifle and Babs had neglected to carry spare ammunition. Luckily I had my .45 Colt automatic pistol, my inseparable companion since the days when I was a buffalo hunter and often had to climb a tree so precipitately that my rifle stayed on the ground. I drew the pistol and set to work upon the slaughter of the hog. I did not wish to kill it, but I had no option : a fighting terrier is uncontrollable, the more you shout at him the more excited he gets ; and having shot at the hog I could not persuade Mick that I did not wish to hurt it.

It was impossible to get a clear view of the animal under the bush. I dodged round the fight like a referee in a boxing-ring, hoping that the hog would not try to vent its fury on me, for I have no delusions about the efficacy of a pistol bullet on a charging beast. I cheered Mick on : he went in, bawled insults in the hog's face, clashed teeth with it, and leapt clear of its rush. The hog thought it had him ; it chased him determinedly, and I cut loose with the .45. At the third shot the beast rolled over, and Mick, not being able in his excitement to distinguish between pistol and rifle, thought the *coup de grâce* administered, and leapt for the throat. The hog threw up its head, hooked his tush under Mick's jaw, held him struggling a moment, and cast him backwards. The instant he was free I got in a head shot which killed the hog, and when Mick returned to the attack, shrieking his fury, he met with no resistance.

After a fight lasting an hour and a half the enemy was overcome : the dog stood wagging his tail, grinning from ear to ear. He had sustained a bad gash in the throat but the jugular was not pierced. Once again Mick had miraculously escaped the fate he was always flirting with. I do not think he passed three months of his life

without being badly injured—he even tried conclusions with a motor-car and was paralysed for six weeks afterwards. We took him to the river to bathe his wound and he trotted home merrily behind us; bleeding copiously, with torn skin swinging under his chin. When I see civilised dogs being hurried off to the vet. to be treated for minor ailments I always think of Mick, who only saw a vet. once in his life and was then given up for lost. He travelled many hundreds of miles and chased many animals after that death sentence. He was a wonder; they could not kill him!

On arrival at camp Babs attended to the wounded hero. At these operations he always sat on one haunch and snored loudly through his nose. He was implicitly obedient and never struggled or bit no matter how painful the job. Someone once said Mick was the only true gentleman he had ever known. After the dressing Bingo smelt him over, realised that he had been fighting wart-hog, and was chagrined. The old hound came to remind me that he had been used to take a part in these little affairs, and I promised him he should have another go at it—even if it were his last.

The afternoon we spent in bathing and loafing. Across the river a pair of Egyptian geese were building a nest in the fork of a tall tree. There was considerable argument about the architecture and construction of that nest. After a spell of building the birds swam about in front of their work, talking continuously. It seemed to me that the male was a fretful, self-opinionated bird, very ill-pleased with the way things were going. He would stand up in the water, flap his wings, and shout: "Look at it! I ask you; did you ever see a worse nesting-site or arottener piece of jerry-building? The first gale will blow the whole lot into the river,

and then what are we going to do? This place is too exposed, the sticks are nothing but punk, and the fish taste oily; all of which I told you when we first had a look at the site, but of course you wouldn't listen; you knew best." His mate was very patient and persuasive. She talked in low, soothing tones, pointing out that the season was getting on and egg-laying time approaching and that they would have to put up with a few disadvantages this year: they would do better the next. By such means she prevailed upon her spouse to put his back into it once more and the work would go forward uninterruptedly until another bout of "temperament" would hit the cock bird, and he would down tools again in renewed disgust.

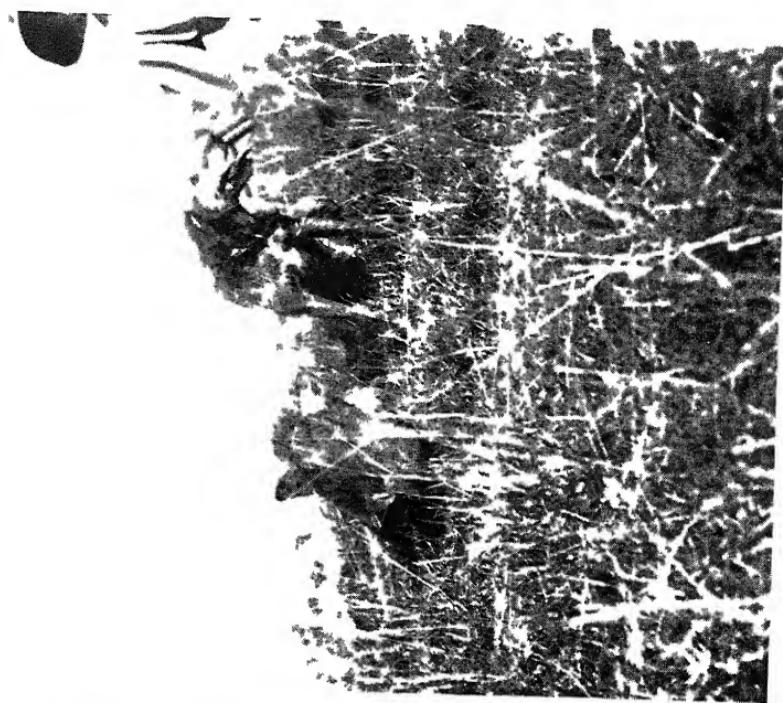
We had been watching this pair for some days and it seemed to us that the hen was showing obvious signs of strain: her eye was worried, she made quick jerky movements, paddling here and there, unable to rest in her moments off duty. But she was still patient with her mate; never once did she raise her voice or turn her back upon his grumblings. For her sake I looked forward to the completion of the nest when the cock bird would be at liberty to patrol the river in lordly fashion before his new residence and his brooding mate, and to recover his good-humour; but one day an accident happened which severely upset domestic arrangements.

I was down at the river sharpening a knife; I saw the cock bird busy among the reeds of an island in mid-stream. Presently he emerged into the river holding a long dry reed in his beak. He took wing towards the nest, driving his heavy body upwards with powerful pinions, but due to some air-current or failure of judgment he missed alighting on the top of the nest and bumped into the side of it. Fluttering futilely he fell

MICK AND THE WAKI HOI MIRR THI BALLE



MICK FIGHTING BINGOS JACKAI



down into the bush, and I could hear the branches cracking as he broke through them to the ground. The hen came rushing through the air to balance on the edge of the nest, calling wildly ; then she flew low over the bush and finally disappeared into it. Meanwhile the cock appeared on the margin of the stream, walking out of the brambles with his usual nautical swagger. His feathers were all awry, his eye was fierce ; it was plain he was in a vile temper.

He swam out from the bank and in a moment his mate joined him. She made some fatuous remark, and then he turned upon her and delivered himself of a tirade of bad language. He was really furious : his neck feathers bristled, he flapped his wings and screamed vituperation. She bowed before his wrath, uttering condolences : “ Dear, dear ! tut-tut ! ” and, “ How very unfortunate ! ” but the cock would not be placated. He carried on to the point of exhaustion, then swam steadily off downstream, without a backward glance at the spot where he and his wife had worked so hard to establish a home. The hen followed dutifully, but it seemed to me there was tragedy in her resignation. I went to tell Babs.

“ That old fool blundered into the bushes and nearly broke his neck and now he has cleared off for good, leaving his wife to follow.”

“ Don’t worry,” said Babs ; “ she will bring him round all right.”

But when three days had passed without sign of our friends and the nest still stood deserted and forlorn against the blue sky, I felt sure that Babs was wrong and that I had witnessed an unheard-of contretemps : the break-up of a union in the nesting season. Then one morning I woke to see the two geese standing side by side on the edge of the nest, regarding the river with

their customary wooden expression. Evidently Babs knew more than I did—she had brought him round all right.

Days passed pleasantly on the Mara. The early mornings were extremely beautiful; the midday glare was trying, but evenings and nights were exquisite. Where drought is common the atmosphere is light and buoyant; the body thrives on sunlight and high spirits. Nature compensates for her severity by hanging her choicest tapestry in the evening sky; there are no skies like desert skies, no balm like the air of a desert night.

I call any stretch of country where water is scarce and where big trees will not grow, a desert; but most deserts are well grassed and wooded, not plains of sterile sand as I used to think them. The famous Kalahari supports trees and bush in profusion and the Taru is so thickly wooded that it makes ideal rhino cover.

Our Mara country had no similarity to a true desert except that it was hot and dry, and, in the main, waterless; and that it supported quantities of tortured thorn trees and was as beautiful in certain moods as the Sahara. We explored up and down the river and found many enjoyable spots; our time was pleasantly occupied in doing the work of the camp and watching the animals with which we were surrounded. The zebra I had shot as a present for a lion was duly accepted by him; he took it into a round patch of bush and there lay hidden while we prowled about outside trying to get a view of him. He was too cunning for us and we left him to the peaceful enjoyment of his meal.

One evening I shot an impala, and I must have done it very badly, for the animal walked off into the thorns as though little the worse for the experience. The dogs

dashed away after it and I followed, leaving Babs to come along at her own pace. I heard a clamour of barking some distance ahead and supposed the impala to be safely held, but when I reached the patch of head-high reeds where the fight was staged and penetrated into it I was in time to see a large wart-hog break cover and dash away, with the dogs in pursuit. Mick had done it again ! I determined to let him make his own way out of the difficulty : I began trailing the buck, paying no attention to the uproar in another patch of bush where the wart-hog had turned at bay again.

I did not find the buck, which must have been but lightly wounded to outdistance the dogs so easily, but it suddenly occurred to me that Babs would follow up the sounds of barking and would walk right onto the infuriated wart-hog.

As soon as I thought of this I dashed off in a great hurry to get there first. I found the combatants grouped in a gully surrounded by thick bush. The wart-hog had his back to a bank and was threatening the three dogs with a pair of tushes that almost met across the top of his nose. Bingo was enjoying himself hugely, leaping and capering in quite his old style ; it was extraordinary that he could avoid the hog's sallies, for his crippled legs made him as clumsy as a seal. When the hog saw me appear within a few yards of it, it broke through the dogs and charged. I was not encumbered by a camera this time : I hit it in the chest with a 9·3 mm. bullet, knocking it flat. To my surprise, it leapt up again and scuttled off through the bush, but the dogs caught it in a few yards, and when I came up it was breathing its last with Bingo's enormous jaws locked on its throat.

That was the last successful hunt the old hound ever

engaged in ; he died soon afterwards of old age and a too-strenuous life. But he had one more escapade on that safari—with a jackal. In his prime Bingo could run down a jackal with ease ; Mick never could. I did not spare jackals ; they hang round the gazelle does until the fauns are born and then murder them. It is a pitiful sight to see the mother vainly trying to protect her young ; butting and striking at one of the enemy, who lures her away so that its mate may steal upon the faun behind the mother's back. The murder is slow and cruel, for a jackal is not powerful enough to finish the job at one bite, and the bleating of the victim recalls the mother to chase away the murderer, so that the performance of luring her away by sham attacks and sneaking in to take a surreptitious bite at the youngster has to be gone through, not once, but several times.

Bingo and I had an understanding about jackals. On open plains he would run them down without mercy. At the last moment, when death was imminent, the jackal would crouch, snarling backward over its shoulder, and the long-legged wolf-hound would go tumbling over its back. These tactics used to annoy Bingo very much. I have seen him fall over the same jackal half a dozen times before he was able to anticipate its sudden stop and make an end of it.

One day on the Mara we were walking through the thorns when we saw a pair of jackals under a bush. I seldom miss a jackal at anything up to a hundred and fifty yards, which is strange, because I find no difficulty in missing an eland at a hundred. I shot one of these jackals in a hurry as it was disappearing into long grass, and broke its hind leg. Mick passed it on his blind side and tore off after the other ; Frika, with no mind of her own, followed his lead ; it was left for the old hound



ENJOYING LIFE ON THE MARA

to round up the quarry. The jackal was too spry for him ; it dodged him several times and eventually went to ground in a hole.

The entrance to the hole was not large enough to admit Bingo ; he sat on guard watching it with an intelligent expression, and when Bingo looked intelligent he had the funniest face I have ever seen on a dog. I whistled for Mick to return, and when he did so I advised him about the jackal in the hole. He went down immediately and a fierce fight began underground.

Bingo was in a great state. He protested that it was his jackal and he was being done out of his rights. For two years, since his accident, he had not been on safari and now, when at last he had a chance of renewing old joys, he was supplanted by that wretched terrier, whom he had got out of numerous scrapes with leopards and lions, oryx and bush-buck, and who never showed him any consideration because he was three months junior.

Presently Mick appeared at the mouth of the burrow dragging the jackal by the throat.

"Leggo my jackal !" yelled Bingo, charging forward with all his great weight.

Mick was knocked aside and the jackal dived back down the hole. I pulled the old hound away and Mick descended again. This time he killed the jackal below ground and brought it up dead.

I hope that Bingo forgot this episode soon afterwards, for it was a sad termination to a long life of successful hunting. I should have liked to have run the old fellow up against a lion and got him killed like a gentleman, but I was too squeamish in those days and he had to die a "straw death" in a town.

We had now been on the Mara about two weeks and had done little to justify our presence there. I felt that

It was the first time I had sat up in a car, and it will be the last. Every movement set the springs creaking ; it is surprising how much bounce there is in an automobile body and how noisy it can be when one is sitting in it on a dark night on the silent veld. To make matters worse I had eaten a quantity of guinea-fowl stew in a hurry for supper, and it digested with musical gurglings, like a thunderstorm running down a drain-pipe. I remembered a young man telling me of an experience such as this when attending an important dinner party. He said that it seemed to him the uproar of his gastric activities drowned the conversation at the punctilious board, and now I knew what he meant, for I felt sure all the lions in the neighbourhood would be terrified at the strange, unruly noises of my stew.

It is humiliating that man should be so much at the mercy of the natural functions of his body ; an elephant can stop its digestion rumbling at will. I hoped the lions would mistake me for an elephant ; but doubtless I exaggerated the magnitude of my misfortune and it was not audible to ears other than my own. My attention was soon distracted from this annoyance by the realisation that there were a great many hyenas about. They were scratching and chuckling on all sides of us, and since they did not approach the kill I suspected that the lion lay near-by, keeping an eye on it.

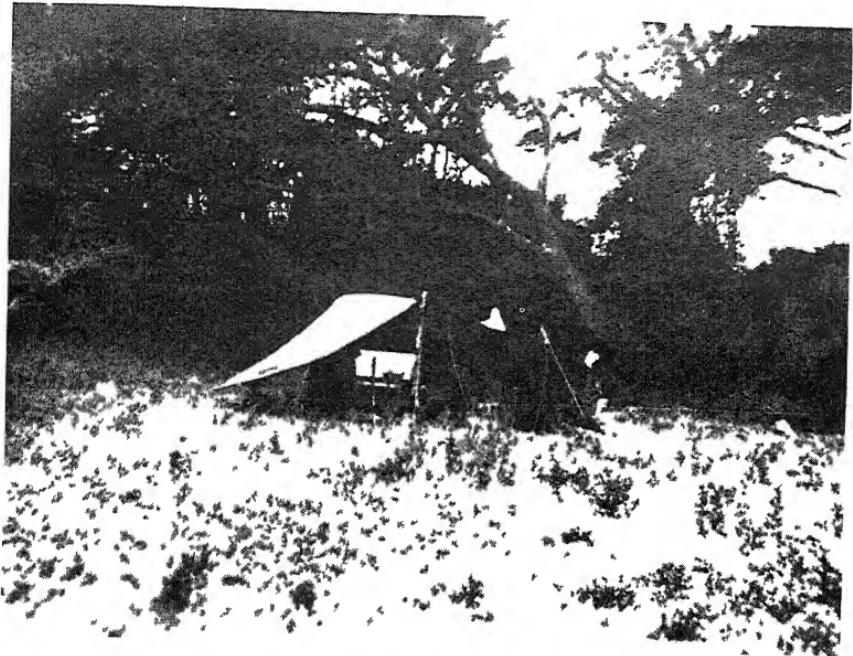
New arrivals kept announcing their presence in pleased, excited voices as they entered the glade from the bush, and those already assembled replied in a festive spirit unusual among these jealous scavengers. Presently one raised his voice and howled mournfully, and at once he was answered from far and near by a dozen wailing cries. They came hurrying from the veld and bush, and from across the river, so that the night seemed



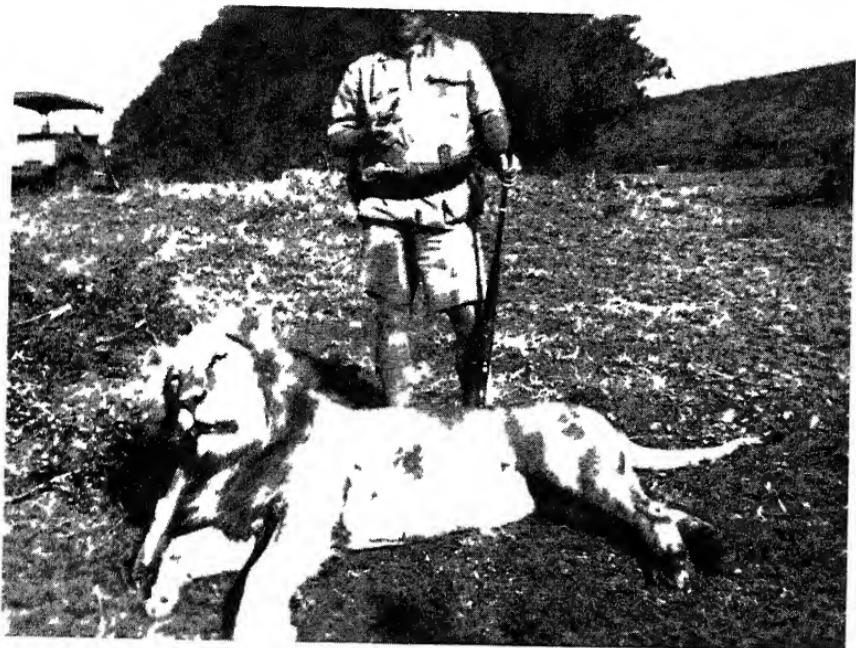
MY CAMP AT THE VILLAGE



THE RIVER WHIRI BAIHID

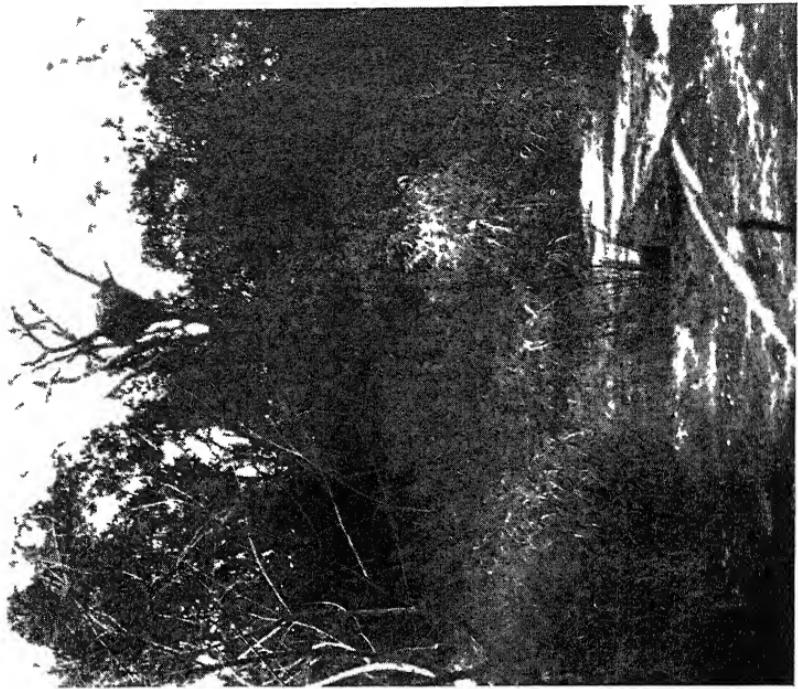


THE CAMP IN THE HOI LOW

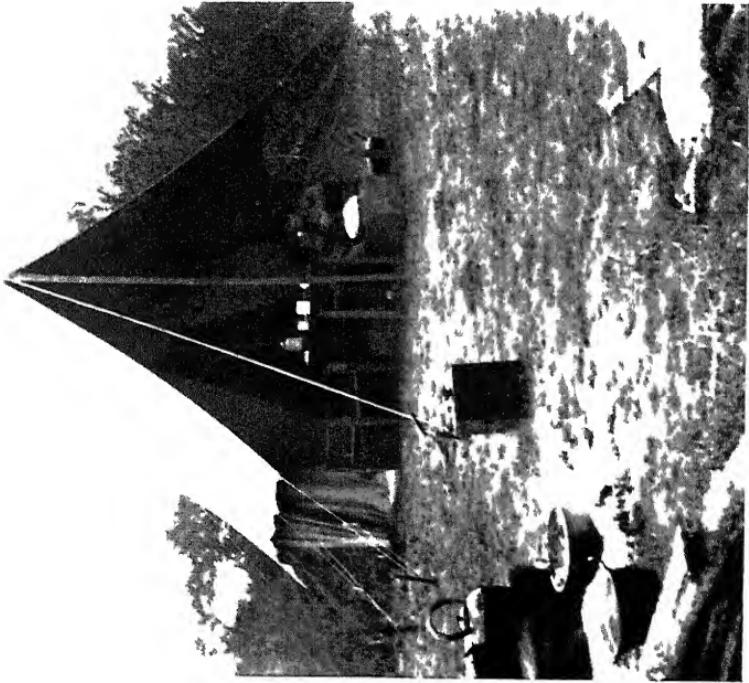


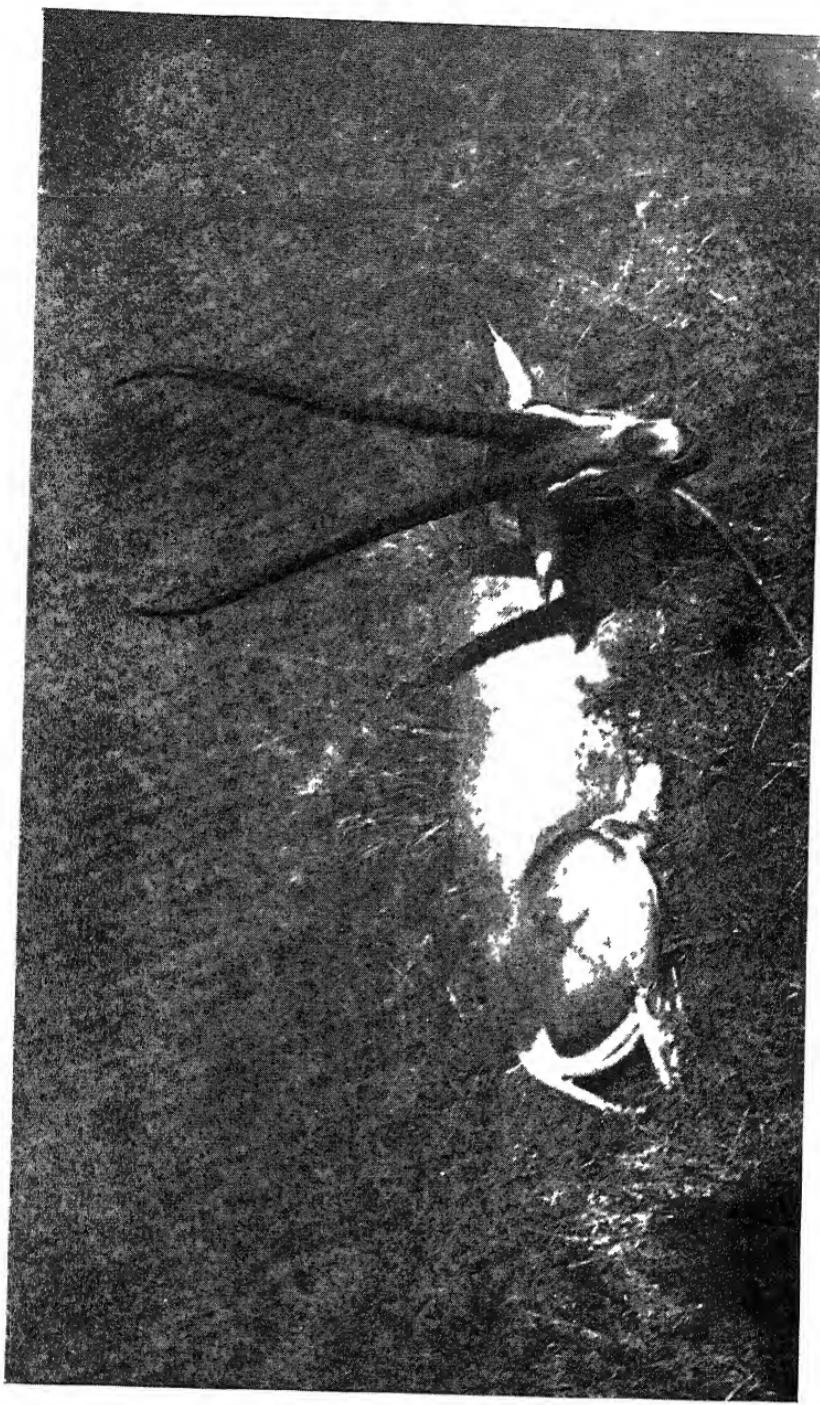
THE BAGDAMMI LION

THE TROUBLESOME NEST



CAMP ON THE MARA





GRANTI GAZELLE (A GOOD HEAD)

full of tormented banshees, drifting about on the wind.

In some places hyenas are very common, but I had never heard so many as this ; not even at Mbugathi, where the Nairobi cattle are slaughtered, nor on the Tanganyika battle-fields, where men were turned into hyena-food in a manner entirely satisfactory to the four-legged undertakers. These hyenas did not fight : they sang little songs of joy and good fellowship, minced to and fro, chuckling and tittering, and generally gave the impression of being out for a good time. The glade was full of them and still they kept arriving. Then suddenly the smothered laughter ceased and we heard them growling. A hyena's growl is a peculiar sound ; like someone striking a slack drum rapidly—glug-glug-glug. They all began to growl, and from every quarter rose waves of sound, gradually coalescing into a maelstrom near the kill. The noise rolled and echoed like the song of a huge flock of colobus—like thousands of sheep on the move in the distance. I had never heard anything like it before ; I was mystified.

At a whisper from me Babs switched on the torch, and we saw a dense mass of animals, gathered in a circle beyond the kill, slowly revolving about some focal point. Amidst the reflection of green eyes we caught a glimpse of red ones, and then I realised what was happening : the hyenas were mobbing the lion ! They were warning him away from the kill, and since there were several hundreds of them he had no option but to go. Slowly they shepherded him down the hill, never for an instant ceasing that horrible, menacing, booing noise. We heard it die out in the distance, and then for a space there was silence.

I was worried and alarmed ; I had never known

hyenas act like this before. Usually they are cowardly brutes : the biggest hyena will run from a poodle dog, although it will bite the dog's head off if overtaken. But it now seemed possible that the Mara hyenas had discovered the strength of unity and were ordering their country to their own benefit. If this were so, we were in serious danger, for pack tactics are unbeatable unless you are prepared for them ; as many a Canadian trapper attacked by famished wolves has found to his cost.

Of all African animals the hyena has the least respect for man. It lives in close proximity to him, prowling round his camp or hut in search of scraps ; and at the finish it eats him, thereby relieving his fellows of the tiresome and gruesome task of interment.

You can frighten a hyena but you cannot bluff him, he knows your capabilities as well as yourself ; and a hyena that will mob a lion is prepared to take a risk of getting hurt.

While I pondered these things my fears were realised : we were suddenly the centre of a chorus of growls. Having got rid of one enemy they had returned to deal with another ! I slipped out my automatic pistol and whispered to Babs to shine the torch. The light shone upon a circle of shaggy forms and green, luminous eyes, ranked a dozen deep about our inadequate refuge.

Hyenas, unlike most wild animals, are wary of a light ; they know what it is because of their familiarity with the habits of man. When the torch shone upon these they pushed back, trying to escape from its beams. I fired several shots into the thick of them, and must have done some damage, for they scattered, but none dropped. This did not surprise me, it requires a plumb-centre shot with a pistol bullet to kill a hyena. In the circumstances I would rather wound than kill them, for a

wounded beast is a better advertisement of punishment and, by its example, influences its fellows to keep out of danger.

The ghouls retired to a more respectful distance after the shooting, but they still faced us threateningly from the semi-obscurity of the bushes beyond reach of the effective light of the torch. I knew that it was the light more than the shooting that alarmed them ; the apparition of a small, dazzling sun between them and us placed them at a disadvantage—the bewildered impotence of a man caught on a country road in the glare of headlights.

People who have shot lions from motor-cars at night have remarked upon the apparent helplessness and stupidity of the animals who, even when wounded, make no effort either to attack or run away. Listening to these stories I have wondered also at the lions' lack of initiative, but one night I had an experience which taught me exactly how it feels to be caught in that predicament. A friend and myself were taking a lorry through the Lumbwa Reserve at night. There had been a storm that day, and when we reached the top of a hill, below which was an insecure bridge, I made my companion stop the car while I walked down to investigate. I spent a quarter of an hour poking about in the river valley and then climbed the hill again to where my friend awaited me with the lorry. I saw the bulk of the truck outlined against the sky and called out that all was well and that the driver could come forward cautiously. He promptly switched on the headlights. It was like being hit in the face by a firework : I did not know where I was nor what I was doing ! I turned round and round helplessly, trying to escape from that intolerable glare, which not only blinded me but seemed to paralyse my mind,

so that I had no notion of which way to go to avoid it.

Now, the eyes of an animal are adapted to receive the scantiest light on dark nights in shadowy bush : if that was the effect of sudden bright illumination upon my accustomed senses, what must it be upon the extraordinarily sensitive eyes of an animal ? No wonder a lion feels as if a star had fallen upon and enveloped him in fiery vapour ! He has no purpose of escaping or resenting the wounds he receives. However, the dazzle wears off to some extent after a few minutes, and the power of the flashlight lies, therefore, in its infrequent use.

We did not light up the hyenas for long ; as soon as they retreated we switched off the torch and allowed the blackness to rush in on us. Immediately they began to crowd round again, resuming their boozing tactics which had been so successful with the lion. When they became really bold we repeated our manœuvre with the flashlight and pistol, and again scattered them.

Several times they tried to hustle us, and always the dazzling light and the crashing pistol caused the overthrow of their plans. Presently they discovered that some of their number were gorging the meat that had occasioned all the argument. Many of the faint-hearts hurried off to participate, and as soon as it was discovered that we made no attempt to dispute the ownership of the kill the hyenas, apparently, concluded they were wasting time in argument which might be more profitably spent.

For the rest of the night we lay listening to them quarrelling and guzzling, but there were always a number gathered about our shelter, keeping an eye on us, and we contemplated with disquiet the possibility of our enemies' supplies running short and their resumption

of interest in our edibility. It was most fortunate that I had shot three impala instead of one, for they are big buck, and three such carcasses go a long way, even amongst hundreds of hyenas. I should think each hyena got a couple of pounds of meat that night, and since every mouthful had to be fought for, it kept them busy till daylight. As soon as it was light enough to see our way we sneaked out of our shelter and slipped furtively off to camp, leaving the bulk of our persecutors still clustered about the remains of the feast. Later in the day we revisited the glade : there were still a few of the ghouls gnawing fleshless bones about the clearing, but in daylight, and unsupported by their fellows, they galloped off as soon as they saw us.

After our experience with the hyenas we did not sit up for lions again but contented ourselves with the observation of such animals as we encountered in veld and bush during the hours of daylight. We spent an enjoyable and interesting holiday and returned to Nairobi without a single trophy of our safari.

CHAPTER VII

INFORMATION ABOUT HUNTING

FIRST in the list of African game animals comes the elephant; he is the biggest and most profitable, since his tusks are used for a variety of commercial articles, such as billiard balls and hair-brushes. The bulk of the world's ivory comes from East Africa: most of it is what is called "found ivory." A few years ago ivory was worth more than twenty shillings per pound, but the Government awarded a fraction of this price to natives who discovered tusks in the bush. A white hunter who shoots a two-hundred-pound bull and gets £200 for his ivory has not profited as much as a native who traps a young cow and gets a few shillings for his, because a hundred shillings is a small fortune to a native and will go further than the European's hundred pounds. Perhaps the legislators who decided to reward the native for finding ivory did not realise this, or they would have hesitated to put such temptation in the humble savage's way. Poisoned arrows and pitfalls account for most of the elephants killed in East Africa to-day, and the lucky native hunter has only to take his tusks to the Boma to get paid for his trouble—providing he is a sufficiently expert liar.

Periodically the Government holds sales of this "found ivory" and doubtless the exchequer benefits materially, but it is amusing to see licences being increased to prohibitive figures in order to save the

elephants from extermination while thousands of pounds of young, sound ivory is sold every year at Zanzibar and Mombasa. It is true that the elephant is slowly being exterminated and that the European is partly to blame, but Europeans do not shoot animals with small tusks, and the death of a big fellow is at least as rare as a fatal motor-car accident in England, so that the diminution in the herds cannot be truthfully attributed to the depredations of the professional white elephant hunter.

No one seems to know how long an elephant lives, but two hundred years or more does not seem improbable. There are many legends of "elephant cemeteries" in Africa, but I never met an experienced hunter who believed in them. Organised massacres of herds of elephants have occurred in the past, and still occur, and the accumulation of bones in certain places may be due to these causes. Again, tusks have been buried by poachers and never recovered by them, and should one stumble upon a cache of ivory it has, most probably, been planted by human beings. Elephants retire into secluded spots when they feel death approaching, but after death the squabbling of birds and hyenas over the carcass goes on for days, and one may be sure that any native in the vicinity becomes aware that there is wealth to be had for the picking up.

I have never found a dead elephant, nor rhino, nor buffalo, nor lion; but I once found a dead giraffe. This is a poor record for seventeen years' hunting, but it is better than that of many others who have never found a dead animal at all! I have found many animals who have succumbed to wounds and injuries, and always by the well-advertised presence of vultures or hyenas. Mr. Bell describes a lake round which lay numerous elephant bones, but he found that in time of drought the water

of that lake became poisoned and the simultaneous deaths of so many beasts was thus explained.

The African elephant cannot be tamed, but I would like to know where Carthage got hers from ! I read somewhere that there used to be a distinct species in North Africa, and perhaps it was these that affrighted the Roman legions ; or they may have been Asiatic elephants. If any stone carvings of them exist this problem should not be difficult to solve.

The African elephant is much bigger than the Indian elephant ; so when you see an elephant in the Zoo remember that the one you will have to shoot at if you go hunting them in Africa will look like its big brother. Tembo, seen in his proper surroundings, is an impressive beast. Some humorist said that from behind he looks like a music-hall comedian in a pair of "property" trousers, but the front view of him is not amusing. He alone is entitled to the soubriquet "monarch of the wilds," for he alone is immune from aggression from any other animal. The black man hunted the elephant from time immemorial but always with respect and circumspection which precluded promiscuous slaughter.

Since the introduction of firearms the elephant has lost its immunity from persecution and has become a shy, unobtrusive beast, reluctant to show itself in the open. Before the coming of the white man the elephants must have roamed in enormous herds. I have seen their trails on the mountains leading to water and they are worn six feet deep in the solid rock ! They are as destructive in a forest as a party of schoolboys in a corn-field, and in a corn-field they have the same effect as a steam-roller.

The Government spends much money and kills many elephants to protect the natives' crops, but one wonders

what the native did before there was a Government, when elephants were as numerous as fleas in a Kikuyu's blanket. Unfortunately natives have no written histories and their legends do not deal with such commonplace matters as the depredations of elephants ; or the Government might save money by finding out and copying the ancient artifices of the barbarian.

Elephants are very playful, both with Nature's and man's property. They play touch with each other, wrestle, and souse each other with water. All this occasions considerable damage to their surroundings ; they are not clumsy, but they are not careful. Their feet are like balloon tyres ; they mould themselves to the ground they tread on. They will cross a patch of lava, all jagged rocks and sudden declivities, where a pony will break its neck. If you drop an elephant's foot from a height of a few feet it will bounce like a football. When playing in the forest they scream with glee, careless of who may hear them. The noise is like that made by the syren of a torpedo-boat destroyer. The trumpeting sound is indescribable, unless one may liken it to the noise made by revolving a piece of wood at the end of a string—it is a fearsome sound, and when it echoes amongst the trees of a big gloomy forest it causes trepidation in the stoutest breast. When descending into a river valley on a wet day the elephants sit down in the mud and slide ; a sort of water-shute such as one sees at exhibitions and amusement palaces. When one wishes to overthrow a tree beyond his power to move he summons help and several of them get hold of it and pull it down. I believe elephants could uproot any tree other than the podocarpus or the baobab. I have seen trees the size of a well-grown oak thrown down by them. Big tuskers are seldom found in a herd ;

they are lonely animals, but sometimes one finds two or three of them together.

If the most unfortunate possession for a working girl is beauty, then the greatest disadvantage to an elephant is valuable tusks. Big tuskers become known, news of them travels from one end of a native location to the other, and it is safe to say that almost every hundred-pounder in the country has been pursued once in his life. I expect it is this that makes them live alone, or in company with similarly persecuted animals. The elephant is a wise beast with a long memory ; he is well able to put two and two together. Old-time hunters like Richardson and Outram used to tell me they got big tuskers out of the herd ; nowadays they are seldom found with the herd—the inference is obvious. They are not misogynists ; they must not be confused with “rogues” who, due to their cantankerous dispositions, are outcasts from elephant society. Lone tuskers visit the herds and mingle with their fellows but they do not stay with them. They are like the old Norse outlaws who dared not foregather with their kind too often or too long, because their heads were forfeit and valuable to their enemies and because they might be surprised with guard relaxed in the joys of conviviality. Of late years the bulls have become ferocious : they charge on sight, and elephant hunting has become more dangerous than it ever was, despite the improvement in arms and ammunition. This proves to me that the valuable animals know they are being hunted and their conduct and habits are influenced by that knowledge.

Now, the easiest way to find a big tusker is to ask a native where one is to be found. If there is one in the vicinity the native will know of it, and if he is not quite certain of the beast’s exact whereabouts you have only

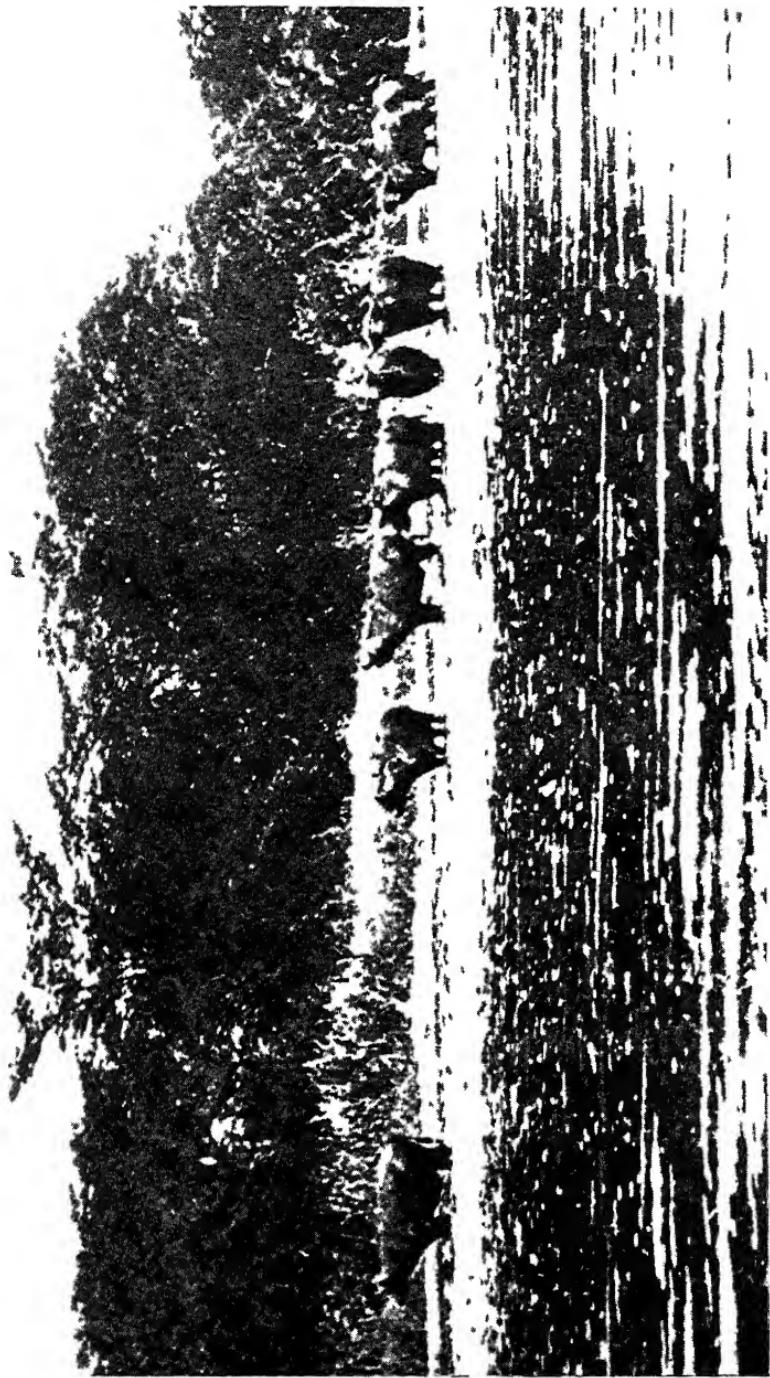
to promise him a reward and he will soon find out. An elephant is so big and leaves such plain indication of his passage that he cannot escape observation in any tract of country where man lives. Another way of finding a big elephant is to visit the rivers and water-holes in the early morning and find where he has drunk. It is then easy to follow his trail and, unless he travels twenty miles without stopping, you must overtake him that day. If the elephant is alone you may be reasonably sure that he is a big one. Having found the spoor you must surprise the elephant, for the essence of all good hunting is to hit the other fellow when he is not looking. Fortunately for the hunter elephants, when not alarmed, are noisy beasts : they make grumbling, rumbling noises, flap their ears, and break off branches. They also leave dung in the trail and crush leaves and grass by their passage, so that by observation of the signs the pursuer may estimate the nearness of his quarry. Once he actually hears the beast he has all the advantage of choosing the time and ground for the battle.

The approach will be up-wind, if possible : the moment the elephant becomes silent he is suspicious and the hunter must expect him either to escape or charge. It is important, consistent with safety, to get as close as possible to the animal. There are many reasons for this : not only is accuracy more likely, but control of the situation after the first shot is fired is easier and more certain. Fifteen yards is a good range from which to shoot, and the hunter should exercise every care in getting that close without discovering his presence. It is not difficult to approach to within fifteen yards of an elephant if one is careful and not hasty, and above all if one does not find it necessary to be accompanied by that useless incubus, a gun-bearer.

A hunter should be able to depend upon himself and his rifle ; he is not shooting pheasants and does not require to be surrounded by servants. A man who cannot steal up to within fifteen yards of an elephant should practise upon other animals until he learns how to do it. I repeat that it is not difficult : it is much harder to get as near to a cow without being spotted.

Arrived at the right position, the hunter should try to shoot the elephant in one of two places : in the head, midway along a line drawn between eye and ear, or in the shoulder just at the edge of his big ear-flap. If neither of these targets presents itself it is as well to wait until one does. An elephant's brain and heart are as big as dinner plates. It is assumed that a man who goes elephant hunting can hit a dinner plate at fifteen paces ; but it may happen that at the crucial moment his sights are wobbling so much that he would be lucky to hit the elephant anywhere. If this is so, let him not be ashamed ; better men than he have trembled like aspens before the start of the hundred yards sprint at an athletic meeting, and a big bull elephant at fifteen paces is an awful sight. If he has practised shooting at close range (a thing that very few men do) he will know that he can hit the target every time, and this knowledge will give him confidence. Another thing that will give him confidence is to know that if he does hit the target the elephant will have no desire, and no chance, to damage him ; it will be fully occupied with its own sensations.

Remembering these things, the hunter should wait until he is steady and confident, take careful aim, repeat to himself the magic words " Not too much foresight, and no jerk," and fire the shot. He should then remain quite still until he sees what happens. If he reloads immediately he will inform the elephant of his where-



BUFFALO HERD AT WATER

abouts ; if he keeps still the elephant will think he has been hit by a thunderbolt and will not perceive the midget who loosed it. The beast will either fall down or run away. Directly he shows signs of doing either the hunter may reload and fire another shot—with care and precision.

Once down an elephant takes time to get up ; it is quite safe to run up to him and shoot him hard enough to keep him down. If he runs away, he will not charge until he has stopped, stood for a moment, and collected his senses. In either event bullets should be supplied as quickly as is consistent with accuracy. There is one other eventuality : the elephant may discover his assailant and charge immediately—a remote contingency. Should this happen the hunter cannot do better than fire a shot at his forehead, just at the base of the trunk, and, if that fails to stop him, run for his life and throw himself flat on the ground under a bush.

Mr. Charles Cottar, whom I call “Africa’s greatest hunter,” tells me that he always shoots them in the trunk to make them lift it out of the way and then shoots them up through the throat with intent to break the spine, but I do not recommend anyone to attempt to emulate Mr. Cottar’s exploits : he stands alone as a wizard of hunting. The bush trick is the best one ; the Wanderobo employ it and they know what they are about. Another good plan is to leave elephants alone ; there are plenty of easier and less frightening ways of enjoying oneself. I have had much to do with them and have always found them amiable unless molested, so that I think one could make good pictures of them without much danger.

The next beast to discuss is the African buffalo. He is fierce and intractable and, unlike the Indian variety,

cannot be tamed. One day I was listening to a lecturer at the South Kensington Natural History Museum ; he was describing the African buffalo which, he said, he was credibly informed was the most dangerous of animals. " Nevertheless," he said, " it has been tamed and in some parts of Africa is used to draw waggons." I should love to see a span of buffalo pulling a waggon out of a mud-hole ! I suppose this erroneous information made little impression upon the lecturer's hearers, who would have been equally uninterested had he told them that the buffalo climbed trees and sang like a bird.

That same afternoon I saw three young men admiring a stuffed cheetah which they thought was a leopard. I corrected them and informed them, as a matter of interest, that the cheetah could run for a hundred yards at a speed of sixty miles an hour. Plainly they thought I was lying and turned away in disgust. In the main hall I overheard a young man telling a girl that the elephant group was made up of unusually large specimens. I then caught sight of an effigy of Frederick Selous, with his little pointed beard and single terai hat, just as I had last seen him in the flesh, and for a moment it seemed that he winked at me. If the African hunter on a visit to England does not wish to feel a stranger I advise him not to pay a visit to the South Kensington Museum to look at the animals he has lived amongst—stuffed !

The buffalo, like the elephant, frequents the high mountain forests or the dense bush of the plains. During the night he grazes in the open, and since though cautious he is no coward, he is often abroad before nightfall and after daybreak. These are the times to catch him, where there is room enough to keep him in view and avoid his retaliation, for the buffalo when wounded is revengeful and in thick cover more full of

wiles and stratagems than any other dangerous beast. He is very difficult to kill and hard to stop when charging. A rhinoceros or elephant will turn aside from the shock of the bullet, but the buffalo keeps on and keeps his head, so that one must either kill him or be killed by him.

In appearance the buffalo is a savage and majestic animal like a giant short-horn bull, with dark curly hair on frontlet and withers, and heavy horns with bosses fifteen inches thick almost meeting across his forehead. His legs are three times as thick as those of the domestic ox ; he is no racehorse but he is enormously powerful. He carries his nose high in the air like a stag "bugling" and does not drop it when he charges, so that he has an excellent view of your efforts to elude him. It is no use trying to side-step a buffalo, a lion, or a leopard : they are too quick and too clever. The only way to escape from a buffalo is to shoot him ; for in moments of emergency there is never a climbable tree to be found. It is true that if he has not seen you, and you remain still, he may never see you ; but once he knows where you are it is only a well-aimed bullet that will save you from him.

This account of the buffalo's vindictiveness does not mean that he will go for you the moment you wound him ; very few animals will do that. You must imagine that even Jack Dempsey, if knocked half across the ring and his jaw broken in several places, would not at once jump up and rush at his assailant, but if he could take cover for a few minutes to collect his wits and shape a policy of retaliation the chances are that he would be eager to get toe to toe with the man who had hit him.

The buffalo is also eager to renew the quarrel. He

will retire into thick cover and wait for you to follow ; he will sneak round behind you and charge suddenly when you least expect it ; or he will emerge from his temporary sanctuary behind a bush and make a determined attack upon you. Sometimes he will just clear off and have nothing further to do with the affair. There are sensible individuals among all species. But in the main the buffalo is a fighter who will not overlook an injury.

Buffaloes are usually found in herds, and it follows that the selected bull must be pursued among his companions. In stalking a herd one must remember to remain invisible to every member of it, for to alarm one is to alarm all. As in elephant hunting, it is advisable to get as close as possible, but it will be impossible, generally, to approach nearer than fifty yards. Anywhere up to a hundred yards is all right for the buffalo. Never shoot at his head—in fact never shoot at the head of any animal except the elephant : the liability of error is too great. When shooting at any beast try to imagine the position of the shoulder you cannot see ; in other words, the shoulder concealed from you by the beast's body. Aim at that ; not behind it, but at the centre of the leg about two-thirds of the way down the thorax. A moment's consideration will show you that however a beast is standing one shoulder will be concealed by its body, unless it is standing parallel with the line of sight, in which case you must shoot at the centre of its chest or beneath its tail. The modern high velocity bullet has great penetration and any of these shots will traverse most of the vital parts of the body. If you knock a buffalo down stay still and watch for him to get up, and if he does knock him down again.

Sometimes the whole herd will charge the hunter,

and this is one reason why I always adopt the cowardly, but sensible, method of shooting from concealment when possible and remaining concealed as long as possible. This method of secret assassination is to be preferred to the bold but highly dangerous practice of challenging the herd by exposing one's position immediately after firing. I have been charged by buffalo herds on several occasions and it is an experience to avoid. Should the sportsman desire more excitement than he obtains from the usual methods of hunting, he may pursue the buffalo into the bush or forest and surprise him at his midday siesta. This requires considerable skill in tracking, a cool head, and a steady hand, but it is the quintessence of hunting, as fighting a shark with a knife may be said to be the last word in fishing.

An idea of the buffaloes' wariness may be obtained by watching them feed in the open. They seldom crop the grass for more than a few seconds without raising their heads for a long stare at their surroundings, and their noses test the wind continually. In forests they will often seek shelter near a troop of monkeys who, from their elevated position, give warning of intrusion.

I have already discussed the habits of the rhinoceros and methods of hunting him, and will not describe him further.

Perhaps the most interesting denizen of the forest is the bongo. He is like a large bush-buck, having the bush-buck's horns on a larger scale but with white tips to them, which a bush-buck seldom has. I suppose the bongo is the most difficult beast to hunt in the whole world. I asked the Kenya Game Warden if he had ever known a man to shoot a bongo without the assistance of natives or dogs, or without coming upon him by chance,

and he replied that he did not believe that it had ever happened.

Pursuit of the bongo will teach one more about hunting than any other form of sport. The animal frequents the mountain forests ; it is a nocturnal feeder, and during the day it lies up in dense thickets, always with its nose to the wind and its ears turned backwards to catch the faintest sound from the direction the hunter will come.

I spent six weeks hunting bongo in the Aberdare forests and all I saw of them was the flash of a dun coat speeding away through the bush. Frequently I heard them making their escapes from dangerous situations, but I never got a shot at one. Considering that I have spent years in learning the forests, and do not take natives with me on these trips, there could have been little to alarm the quarry to the surprise of which I was devoting all my skill.

Unfortunately for the bongo he is a fighting buck and will not run from dogs. It is therefore easy to put dogs on his trail and shoot him while he is defending himself. This, to my knowledge, is the only way he is shot—except that he is butchered while eating maize by moonlight in native and European shambas.

I have known fat, middle-aged visitors who have shot bongo, and frequently they aver to have done it without assistance, but I know better. When such hunters as Cottar and Black cannot do it one need not suppose that a tyro could. Of course, there is always a possibility of falling asleep in the forest and awaking to see a bongo within twenty yards (which is how I shot a record bush-buck) ; but I except all such lucky accidents from my designation of legitimate killings.

The Wanderobo with their famished mongrels will

always procure a bongo for a man who is willing to pay for it. The procedure is to camp in the forest and wait until the natives have segregated a bongo in a patch of bush, surrounding him with men and dogs so that he cannot escape. The sportsman then moves at his leisure to the scene of action, and while the bongo's attention is occupied with the dogs he advances to within twenty or thirty paces and delivers the fatal shot.

In the Chepulungu Forest hundreds of bongo are killed every year by this means. I fear that I shall never shoot a bongo, for I cannot believe that simplification of any sport improves it. If it is an advantage to hunt pheasants with beaters and bongo with dogs, then it is preferable to play tennis without a net and golf without a hole. The attraction of all sport lies in difficulty and danger, but the danger should not be too great : no one but a lunatic gets killed for pleasure.

I have described one way of hunting the lion : there are other and more popular ways. One is by means of the drive. A lion is located in a patch of bush ; natives, shouting and beating tins, walk through it and drive him out to the waiting sportsmen. It is important that the beaters should advance down-wind, when the lion, driven from his concealment, will retreat to the next nearest piece of good cover. The guns must be posted in anticipation of this.

The best way to hunt lion is to put out a bait and to approach it in the early morning as soon as there is sufficient light for accurate shooting. The bait should be covered up with bush or grass, firmly secured, and placed fifty yards up-wind from good cover. The sportsman should rehearse his approach through the cover and should leave some sign to show him his whereabouts when he returns in the faint light of dawn. In the chill,

gloomy hour before sunrise it is easy to mistake objects seen previously in bright sunlight, and in stalking a kill one must know exactly where that kill is.

The shot for the lion is the opposite shoulder or the centre of the chest as I have described. Lions' heads slope at an acute angle and are masked by hair, which makes the brain shot very uncertain. After shooting, keep still ; there is no sense in acting like an enthusiast at a football game. It may be useful to tell how I make sure lions are about before wasting time in hunting them.

The simplest way to ascertain this is to listen at night for the lion's voice, but if he is not heard it does not always mean that he is not there. In many districts, stiff with lions, you will not hear them. This is when they have been hunted and are wary. By examining the mud along water-courses you may find spoor and, no matter how old, it is a sure guide, for, in my experience, where lion has been, lion will be. They are regular in their habits, and though they may be away on holiday they will return.

Drop a kill and cover it up ; in the morning it will be untouched or uncovered. If it is untouched it may be because it is not yet ripe enough to disseminate its sweetness on the air ; in that case it is advisable to return the following day ; but if it is uncovered you must discover what has fed from it. If it has been lifted and carried a lion has done it ; if it has been dragged hyenas are probably responsible. Sometimes lions eat from the kill without moving it ; a close inspection of the ground may disclose lion-spoor, but usually there are so many hyena-prints that the spoor is confusing. The hyena's claws are like the dog's, not retractile ; so that if claw marks are seen it is not leopard-spoor. Lion-spoor is

enormous ; you cannot mistake it. A good plan is to inspect the nearest water-hole or stream-bed, and if there is fresh lion-spoor you may be certain he has fed from your kill.

Having ascertained that a lion has fed, you may be confident that he will return after dark and may make arrangements accordingly. Do not forget to tether the kill firmly or all your trouble will be wasted. It may seem surprising that lions should find dead meat in a big tract of country, but really it is not difficult for them. There is a prevailing wind in veld and bush : down-wind from a kill the taint is perceptible to human nostrils for a distance of several hundred yards, a lion can smell it much further. Hyenas always quarrel over meat, and to the accustomed ear their growls and shrieks are certain indication of their employment. At dusk lions start on their nightly patrol, and they cover most of their hunting-ground, travelling upwards of thirty miles before morning. They often have to abstain from food for a week at a time, and there is little fear of their overlooking a gratuitous meal in their district.

I have known a pack of lions to kill nightly when the grass was long and game plentiful, and at such times it is difficult to entice them to a bait ; but with unforeseen chances the hunter must contend, suiting his methods to the conditions. A lion is like a policeman ; he is quite safe as long as you do not assault him. But you should always remember you are dealing with individuals, not automatons, and that the actions of any individual are conjectural. I have described the life of the lion in *The Lion's Way* and will not recapitulate his habits here.

The leopard is an interesting animal ; one of the most difficult to hunt. His favourite food is monkey, pig,

and impala. Rocks and impala generally means leopard. You will find him in forest, scrub-bush, open veld (where there is a rocky donga to shelter him), or back gardens. With the exception of the bush-buck there is no animal so well able to survive the proximity and persecution of man. There are still leopards living within a few miles of Cape Town !

The leopard sleeps in a cave or tree, from which he emerges an hour before sunset to quench his thirst at stream or water-hole. By tethering a goat near his drinking-place one may prevail with him to take supper before the light fails. The goat should be a noisy one, and the hunter should lie up in the bush within thirty yards of it, never removing his gaze from it for an instant, for a leopard will appear suddenly and vanish like a ghost, and the goat will go with him.

Leopards may be driven, like lions, but as they are generally found in dense cover and are loath to break into the open, the sportsman has little chance of getting a shot at them. Leopards abound ; they are to be found almost anywhere, but they seldom *are* found. Their tracks are common enough ; one may hear them grunting in the night, but to see and shoot them is difficult. They are powerful beasts for their size, and as ferocious as anything in the wilderness. When wounded they retreat into grass or bush, and if followed will attack with fury and determination. To follow a wounded leopard into bush without the assistance of dogs is to ask for trouble and almost certainly to get it. It is one form of foolishness in which I will not engage.

Anyone hunting leopards should carry a revolver or pistol—not buttoned up in a leather box but free and usable like a cowboy's weapon. He will be able to

use this when struggling on the ground with a wounded leopard, and since the animal requires about two minutes to rip him into tatters he may save himself injury if he is quick. The idea is to hold the leopard off with one hand while using the gun with the other : the hand that does the holding off is sacrificed in a good cause.

Do not go into bush after a wounded leopard, I beg of you : Charles Cottar is the only man who makes a practice of it, and he has been mauled three times. Other men are mauled every time.

Despite the leopard's customary evasion of man, occasionally he is bold to the point of insolence. I have disturbed him wandering on the veld in broad daylight half a mile from cover. Once I sat in a car and watched a leopard playing with a wounded plover twenty yards away ; the engine of the car was running noisily but the leopard paid no attention. At night they prowl round camp or house seeking to steal a domestic pet. A number of dogs will keep them away but a solitary animal falls an easy prey. I cannot help admiring the courage and resource of this predatory animal who refuses to be frightened from his hunting-grounds by the proximity of man.

Unfortunately man has little sympathy for those creatures who annoy him and are a thorn in his flesh. The leopard is classed as vermin ; he may be trapped or poisoned with impunity, and since vermin are credited with no more feelings than were the enemies of the Orthodox Church in our more Christian epochs no torture is considered unjustifiable in the extermination of the outlaw. Men poison him with strychnine, a diabolical act ; they set traps in trees so that the captured beast cannot use his great strength to free himself but

hangs by one leg all night until the trapper can spare time to visit the scene of his barbarity. They set trap-guns which shoot him through the body, eviscerate him, but do not immediately kill him. These are men who become enraged when they see a horse or dog ill-treated.

One day an old man of seventy came to me to buy a new rifle. A leopard was raiding his boma and killing sheep. He told me he had spent many nights out of bed watching for the marauder and thought he ought to be well armed to deal with him effectively. I indicated a leopard trap lately arrived from America: it was equipped with long teeth and was guaranteed to hold anything that was caught in its powerful jaws. The old man gave it a scornful glance.

"I have hunted game since I was ten years old," he said; "I have never used one of those things and I won't begin now."

If he could not outwit that leopard by fair means it might go on robbing him for all he cared. A real sportsman, that old-timer!

A newcomer to the country asked me how we poisoned leopards.

"We don't," I replied. "We shoot them."

How I wished that my reply had been truthful.

CHAPTER VIII

HOW TO GO ON SAFARI

If a man wrote to me enquiring the cost per month of a shooting safari, I quoted him as follows :

Licence, £100 ; hire of lorry, £50 ; white hunter, £150 ; servants (including gun-bearer, skinner, cook, tent boy, and four porters), £15 ; hire of equipment, £40 ; foodstuffs, £50—total, £405 per month.

In addition to this he would need clothes for his boys, arms and ammunition, cameras and films, and medicines. It is only a rich man who can afford to travel in this style. He has every comfort, late dinner every night, the most comfortable tents, beds, and general equipment ; and he is piloted by an expert who will see that he gets the game he wants and does not die in the getting of it.

A safari lasting several months would reduce this expenditure per month, but not very much. Three months at a thousand pounds would be about right. I would handle one man for four hundred pounds or two men for six hundred pounds per month.

There are several white hunters who outfit safari themselves, but most of the business is done by Nairobi firms, who undertake the outfitting and engage all the servants for the trip for an inclusive figure. The visitor who wishes to hunt in this way need only present himself in Nairobi and apply to any of these firms and, within a week, he can take the field.

But there is another class of sportsman who cannot afford, or does not wish, to hunt in this way. For the benefit of such people I will tender advice of how to have a sporting holiday at very little cost.

In the first instance there is the steamer fare. Many East African settlers travel third class on the Union Castle ships, and I can vouch for it that the accommodation is comfortable and the company by no means obnoxious. If the traveller is content to rough it in the field he will not require luxury upon the first part of his adventure. Upon arrival at Mombasa he should take the train to an up-country station (travelling first class to avoid being herded with Indians or natives) and put up at one of the following hotels : White Rhino, Nyeri ; Silverbeck, Nanyuki ; Kijabe Hotel, Kijabe ; Cross Roads, Molo ; Georgio's Hotel, Dodoma ; Myer's Hotel, Iringa. The last two are in Tanganyika, and to reach them from Nairobi a car trip will have to be arranged for.

Having taken up his residence in one of these hotels at a cost of about eighteen shillings a day, the prospective hunter will let it be known that he is willing to pay the expenses of a safari should any local settler desire to take a holiday in his company. At first he will be offered the services of professional hunters at more or less exorbitant fees, but if he stands firm and declares that he will not pay wages he will find someone of his own kidney eager to spend a month or more on a casual safari such as I have described in these pages.

Settlers will drop in for lunch or a drink at the hotel, and if they take a liking to the visitor they will ask him to stay with them and introduce him to their friends, among whom there is likely to be one who will show him the ropes on his first safari. This man may want to

charge a pound a day for the use of his waggon or lorry, and he may expect his servants' wages to be paid, but these items are not ruinous, and one must expect to pay something for experience.

The settler will supply everything that is needed : he will find, or borrow, an old tent, will supply cook and porters from his own staff, and will take his own crockery and cooking-pots. The visitor may be required to buy a few odds and ends to complete the outfit.

If the guide is a man who has been on similar trips for his own amusement he will know where to find game in healthy, pleasant country. All the districts I have named are within easy reach of such country. Having a farm or business to attend to it is probable that he will not be able to stay out more than a few weeks, but at the end of that time the visitor will feel confident and able to look after himself.

On such a safari he will not wade in the blood of slaughtered lions, nor count his trophies by the dozen, but he will do some hunting, have an enjoyable holiday, and learn how to live in the wilds. The cost of such a safari should not exceed £60, and if transport does not have to be paid for, that amount can be halved. The licence is a heavy item (£100 per year), but if the sportsman is an active member of His Majesty's Forces he may hunt for £20.

At the end of the first trip he will know if he wishes to make another, and if he does I advise him to proceed in the following way. Engage an English-speaking native to act as interpreter—and do not believe a word he says. Pay a visit to Nairobi, purchase a second-hand truck, costing about £100, a tent (7 x 9) equipped with a fly and verandah, £20 ; bed, table, and chair ; a petrol lamp, and a few lanterns ; shovels,

rope, cooking-pots, plates and cutlery, etcetera. These smaller items should not cost more than £25. The petrol lamp is a godsend in camp on dark nights.

When buying rations plenty of tinned fruit and tinned tomatoes should be included; but lime juice, being bulky and expensive, is a luxury one can do without.

A medicine chest containing a few necessary drugs, a syringe, and some bandages should form part of the equipment. The syringe is for squirting disinfectant into a bad wound should any of the party sustain one. At a pinch the operation can be performed with a rifle barrel—thrust it into the hole and pour the liquid down it. A hunter should carry a tiny waterproof box containing permanganate of potash so that if injured he can apply it instantly. This has saved many men's lives.

A hunting-knife should be selected with care that the steel is not too hard. Many expensive knives require a long time for sharpening, and it is annoying when skinning a trophy to have to spend hours sharpening knives. Most professional hunters carry a knife called the Bushman's Friend, which costs about half a crown and can be sharpened on any piece of stone in a few minutes.

We now come to the most interesting and essential part of the sportsman's equipment: the battery. I could talk rifles all night, and have frequently done so. Every hunter has his own opinion about weapons, but we are all agreed about one thing: what *not* to use. Curiously enough most visitors arrive armed with the weapons we distrust and despise, so that it would seem that city gunsmiths are not wise advisers. Personally, I do not use double-barrels. I have nothing against them except that they are needlessly heavy and that their

ammunition is costly. I suppose the most popular rifle in Africa is the .256 Mannlicher-Schoenæur. It is cheap, easy to carry and thoroughly efficient ; but for me it is not heavy enough. It will kill anything, elephant included ; but in my hands it will scarcely kill anything. It fulfils the chief function of a rifle : that it can be made as much a portion of the hunter's equipment as his pipe —that is to say it need never be out of his reach.

Now, I take it that the better a man knows his rifle the more expert he will be with it : it should be a familiar friend ; he should not have to pause before shooting to consider what particular sight he takes with it, or whether it will perform the duty required of it. It should be always in his hand or near to him so that he can grasp it in a hurry, and the cartridges in his pocket should be the ones to fit it : he must not turn out in the night to fight a lion with a .450 rifle and .256 ammunition. I knew a man who when he had bought a new rifle used to lay it on a table in his house. Whenever he passed it he would snatch it up and take an imaginary shot at a charging beast. By this means he learnt the feel of the rifle.

I believe that the man who handles one weapon only will be more expert at protecting himself and killing game than the man who handles more than one. It follows that we must find the ideal "all round" rifle ; it must be powerful enough to deal a smashing blow at a dangerous beast, light enough to carry through the thickest bush on the longest day, and dainty enough not to smash a gazelle to pieces when shooting for meat. If its ammunition is cheap it will be an additional advantage.

For years my choice hovered between the .375 Holland & Holland magnum, and the .350 Rigby magnum. These are both magnificent weapons which will kill the

largest elephant instantly, but both of them have detractions : they are a little too powerful for light work and their ammunition is expensive. I then took to the 9·3 mm. Mauser and liked it immensely ; but in 1928 I fell in love with the .30 Springfield, and henceforth that is my rifle. It is light, inexpensive, accurate, penetrating, and has surprising stopping power. Its trajectory is flat, it does not kick, and it does not jam. I always use the 220 grain bullet with it, which though not as fast as the lighter bullets has, in my opinion, greater stopping effect. I have never tried it on elephants, but other men tell me they have had great success using it on those beasts. Some people may consider it a light rifle for big game, but I agree with Karamojo Bell that penetration and accuracy is more important than weight of lead.

The effect of rifles is peculiar. On paper ballistics may be splendid, but in the field they are often disappointing. Makers would appear to strike the satisfactory ballistics more by luck than judgment, for some firms have produced rifles in several calibres, some of which are excellent, while others have become a by-word for inefficiency among African hunters. But they are all superb on a shooting range.

There are many pitfalls to avoid. If the velocity is too low the punch is poor ; if too high, the bullet may break up and disseminate its striking force, or worse still, go slap through the beast without causing it much trouble. One must remember that the object is not only to kill an animal but to knock it down and prevent it either escaping or charging. In this respect the .303 is splendid for small buck : they go over as though hit by a cricket ball ; while the .275 will often inflict a mortal wound which only takes effect after the animal has lost itself in the bush. But with larger beasts such as oryx

and eland the .275 is infinitely preferable to the .303; it has more penetration and hits harder when there is plenty of flesh on which to expend its energy. The .30 (1906 model) deals faithfully with all alike. What it hits, it gets.

I cannot do better than recommend these rifles for those who purpose using the magazine weapon: Holland & Holland .375 magnum; John Rigby .350 magnum; Westley Richards .318; Rigby .275; Waffenfabrik Mauser .366; Springfield .30 (model -06); Mannlicher .256. The four first are rather expensive, but beautiful weapons; the others can be bought for about fifteen pounds each. If Mr. Rigby would bring down the price of his ammunition I might be tempted to go over to his .275, for a more beautifully made and efficient little rifle does not exist, but while it remains a rich man's weapon I stick to the Springfield.

This information will be of little use to those who prefer doubles, so I had better say something about them. For two years I was the safari expert in one of the largest gunsmiths in Africa; it was my job to test and sight clients' weapons before they went shooting with them, and I have handled and fired almost every type of rifle in common use. There are some firms who make rifles as the early Italian Masters painted pictures: each is a work of art. Of these, some are better than others, but none are bad: they never make a bad rifle. Their names are Purdey, Greener, Evans, Rigby, Holland & Holland, and Westley Richards. Needless to say all their wares are costly, but it is almost impossible to shoot them out; and when you pull the trigger they go off, and shoot straight—if the strikers have not been broken by careless handling.

All these firms make the popular calibres such as

·470 and ·450. Some have specialised in a particular bore such as Holland & Holland with the ·465 (a beautiful rifle with a perfect ejector), or Westley Richards with the ·577 single trigger. These rifles are intended for big game, not for small buck.

Many hunters use nothing but big doubles for big animals. It is true that an expert with a double ejector, and with two spare cartridges in his hand, can fire four shots from a double while another man is firing three from a magazine : I have often seen it done. Nevertheless the heavy double is a more weighty and clumsy weapon to carry than the magazine, and one should remember that such famous elephant hunters as Neuman and Bell used light rifles. Bell used the Rigby ·275 mostly ; Neuman used the ·303, but it missed fire once and nearly got him killed—it was an old, unreliable weapon. Charles Cottar used a ·450 Winchester : he said it was the same he had always used but it had been restocked and rebarrelled several times.

If one uses a heavy double for big game one must use a light rifle for small game, and this means two different habits of shooting, and a gun-bearer hanging around blowing his nose and coughing at wrong moments, and climbing trees with the spare ammunition in his pocket when it is badly needed. Visitors have told me they prefer a double because they are used to handling a shot-gun, but this is a sound reason for not having a double, for rifle shooting is different from shot-gun shooting, and anything which inclines the marksman to "snapping" is to be avoided. Firing a rifle straight is a deliberate and considered act and must never be confused with the spasmodic, unprecise action of bird shooting : you cannot put a halo of slugs round the head of a charging buffalo with a ·450 Evans. A good bird shot is

seldom a good big game shot, and vice versa. However, every man to his choice, and my reader may be a confirmed "double man" and shoot more beasts than ever I shall do.

Having selected his rifle the sportsman should get acquainted with it. He should learn by actual experience just where to aim at twenty, fifty, a hundred, and a hundred and fifty yards. Other ranges do not matter so much, although it is useful to know what will happen if you try for a buck at three hundred. The various aims at the various distances should be memorised beyond possibility of error, and it is here that the one-rifle man scores : he is not confused with too much detail ; he knows at once how much foresight to allow at any given range.

Leaf backsights are a nuisance ; they complicate matters. For instance, a three hundred yard leaf is of help at exactly three hundred yards' range, but where must one aim at two hundred and sixty ? It is much easier to accustom oneself to judging distances on the rifle rather than on the ground. When I see an animal through the sights of a rifle I instinctively adjust my foresight to show just enough bead to give me the correct range. The appearance of the animal suggests the aim. It is all habit—another point for the one-rifle man. After a time the marksman should find that he cannot miss anything at any range up to hundred and fifty yards, unless he is troubled by bad light or nerves. Bad light is unavoidable ; nerves may be conquered by the realisation that accuracy is customary and habitual and that nothing can go amiss with the shooter if only he shoots his best.

Practice with the rifle is essential to the making of a good hunter and cheap ammunition is desirable for this

reason. He should accustom himself to shooting quickly but without undue haste, and he should always aim for the same length of time, and shoot at the end of it. When the butt has settled into the shoulder five seconds is ample time to allow for bringing the sights to bear and squeezing the trigger ; it should really be done quicker. In game shooting one must make one's mistakes quickly, which is why good target shots are bad game shots : they have to shoot before they want to, or not shoot at all. In aiming there is a "possibility" when the sights come on, and a succession of "improbabilities" when they flicker off again. I always take the first chance : when the sights come into line the first time I squeeze the final fraction on the trigger. Sometimes I make a good shot, sometimes a bad ; but on the average result I should do no better if I hung on my aim for an hour. A light trigger pull is necessary for good shooting : four and a half pounds is about right for most people. Some men favour the V backsight, some the U ; I prefer the U. When closing the bolt of a rifle, use energy : nothing is so likely to cause a jam as cautious working of the bolt.

Never load a magazine rifle other than from the magazine : you will damage the ejector. "Five in the box and one up the spout" puts most rifles out of action very quickly, and a rifle that will not eject is a dangerous weapon to its owner. Do not hold the trigger and close the bolt on a live cartridge ; you need only knock the cocking-piece accidentally to blow your head off.

When walking up to a presumably dead beast prepare for it to come to life at any moment, but remember the safety catch on the rifle and do not try to shoot with it at safety, nor forget to replace it at safety before you ground it. I have seen men put down rifles at full

cock to examine the kill and a native has come along and handed them the rifle again, with surprising results.

If one morning you cannot hit a haystack examine both sights to see if they have been shifted by an accidental knock. I once spent a miserable three days because my backsight had shifted and I had not sense enough to notice it. Carry a spare striker and spring, and learn how to fit them ; it is quite simple. If you are too tired or too lazy to clean your rifle at night push an oily brush through the barrel ; you can then leave it for three days and it will not corrode. That is all I have to say about rifles.

The sportsman will require a shot-gun, for he will want to live on bird-meat in preference to venison. Any old gas-pipe will do to knock guinea-fowl out of trees, but there is excellent bird shooting on safari to justify a more precise weapon if the sportsman's tastes lie that way. There is also the matter of a pistol, if it is considered necessary. Nothing but a .45 automatic is of much use. Game animals can withstand terrific punishment and a soft revolver bullet does not do them much damage.

For clothing, khaki shorts and jumpers are the customary wear, but for those who do not like shorts, slacks may be substituted. Riding breeches are hot and uncomfortable and if they get wet are most unpleasant. Light cellular underclothing is excellent, and a thick sweater, or cardigan, is a necessity. Three changes of clothes is all one requires ; in that climate anything can be washed and dried in a couple of hours. A mosquito net is a comfort, for even where there are no mosquitoes there are flies. The head covering should be a double terai, costing from thirty-five shillings to fifty shillings ; the more expensive the better. Helmets are adequate,

but are often a nuisance in bush or in a thunderstorm. Footwear should consist of ankle-length boots, or the best kind of moccasin, greased under pressure. They must be well nailed : veld grass is as slippery as glass and loose rubble on a river bank is worse. High boots are to be avoided ; on a long trek they press down on the heels. For protection of the legs nothing beats puttees, although leggings are comfortable and protective. A mackintosh is useful ; a pair of canvas shoes a great asset.

There are several firms in London specialising in equipment for African sportsmen. Personally, I dealt with Richman, Symes & Co., of 39 Charterhouse Square, from whom one can obtain anything from clothing to motor-lorries. They are amiable and efficient people to deal with. Trophies may be sent to such firms as this, or Roland Ward of Piccadilly, or Gerrard & Sons of Camden Town.

There is nothing else required to live the simple life except a love of hard work and a taste for simple, natural pleasures.

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